BUSINESS / B2-1
Why RP's top business schools are not at par with world's best

ENTERTAINMENT / E1
Fernando: Cooperation, not abolition, is answer to MMFF problems

WORLD / A22
Democrat majority in US Congress to fight for an end to Iraq war

METRO / A19
5 kids trapped in burning house killed

Some instant heroes find fame unbearable

NEW YORK—DANIEL Santos became an instant hero in 1986 when he jumped 20 meters off a bridge into the Hudson River to rescue a young woman trying to commit suicide.

SOPHIE, A4

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Monday, January 8, 2007 ★★ 6 sections / Vol. 22 / No. 31 P18 inquirer.inquirer.net

Long lines at Naia irk foreign airlines

By Nikko Dizon

AIRLINE COMPANIES OPERATING OUT OF THE Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Naia) are blaming the long queues at the departure immigration counters and a defective baggage facility for the delays in outbound flights.

Officials of the Airline Operators Council (AOC) said that given the "deluge in passen-

LORENZO, A4

Indon JI terrorist slain in Tawi-Tawi

Navy says Dulmatin aide among 6 dead

AN INDONESIAN MEMBER OF THE AL-QAIDA-linked Jemaah Islamiyah was among six militants killed at the weekend in a sea clash with Philippine troops off the country's southern frontier, an official said yesterday.

The Philippine Army, Navy and Marines were involved in Saturday's gun battle that killed the six militants aboard a motorboat off Tawi-Tawi, Navy spokesperson Lt. Cmdr. Giovanni Carlo Bacordo said.

Indonesian terrorist suspect Dulmin, who used only one name and allegedly belonged to the Indonesian-based militant group Jemaah Islamiyah, was among the dead, Bacordo said.

Five Filipino members of the Abu Sayyaf, a group also thought to have links to al-Qaida, also were killed, he said.

Gufron was a key aide of Dulmatin, a top Indonesian terror suspect who has been hunted by troops in a months-long US-backed offensive on Jolo island, he said.

Gufron's reported death bolstered military reports that Indonesian militants had taken refuge in the southern Philippines—the scene of a decades-old Moro separatist insurgency.

Philippine authorities reported on Saturday that among the Filipino militants killed was Jukuan Jamalul. Jamalul, alias Black Killer, was among 17 Abu Sayyaf bandits, including the group's chieftain Khadafy Janjalani, wanted by the United States for attacks on American citizens.

US and Philippine authorities had offered a reward of P1 million for the capture of Jamalul, whose group was said to be involved in the taking of more than a dozen hostages in 2000 from the Malaysian resort of Sipadan.

Another ranking Abu Sayyaf

INDON, A8

VIGILANCE against corruption is also needed to realize the Filipino soldier's dream of modernization.

No important policy shift seen in May polls

By Amando Doronila

ON THE SECOND DAY OF THEIR takeover of the 110th US Congress on Thursday, the new Democratic leadership blasted plans of President George W. Bush to increase the 140,000 American troops already in Iraq by 8,000 to 9,000.

In a letter sent to Bush on Friday, newly elected House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid flexed the muscles of the new Democratic majority by urging him to begin pulling troops out of Iraq in four to six months. (See story in World, Page A22.)

They also asked Bush to begin shifting the mission of US forces in Iraq from combat to training and logistical support of the troops.

ANALYSIS

"We are well past the point of more troops for Iraq," Pelosi and Reid wrote in an attempt to seize the initiative from Bush even as the president was preparing to announce this week a new war strategy in Iraq, where US troop fatalities had increased to more than 3,000.

NO IMPORTANT, A6

PROGRAM SETBACKS

AFP modernization drive sputters

By Yvonne Chua and Luz Rimban
Correspondents

(First of three parts)

SOMEWHERE IN CENTRAL LUZON—In the foothills of the Sierra Madre mountains, Army soldiers are on a mission to "achieve strategic defeat of the communist terrorist movement" in three years, just as their Commander in Chief has ordered.

But the soldiers wish they had helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft to conduct air strikes, thermal-imaging weapons and night-vision goggles to locate the enemy in mountainous terrain even at night, bulletproof vests and helmets to protect soldiers' "fatal body parts," and secure, lightweight all-weather radios for quick contact with army base.

SPECIAL REPORT

That's all in their dreams. In their makeshift base, the soldiers

AFP, A6

2 senators praise VFA official for quitting post

By TJ Burgonio

THE OUTSPOKEN EXECUTIVE director of the Presidential Commission on the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFAComm) has done an "honorable thing" by resigning from the government, two administration senators said yesterday.

Undersecretary Zosimo Paredes' resignation, however, had no effect on VFAComm operations, Sen. Jinkee Arroyo said. If at all, it would boost the relations between Malacañang and the Senate on the VFA, Sen. Ibkian Defensor Savings said.

For in view of Malacañang's flip-flopping, Arroyo demanded that the administration make up its mind on whether it wanted the VFA reviewed or not.

After ruling Malacañang over his open criticism of the transfer of convicted rapist US Marine Lance Cpl. Daniel Smith back to US custody, Paredes said Saturday he was quitting his post and would be submitting his resignation letter this week.

"We resigns; it's accepted because he could not agree with Malacañang. That's an honorable course for him to take. That should serve as an example to officialdom," Arroyo said in an interview.

"They could not get along; a parting of ways inevitably follows. Nothing unusual about it."

"That's good," said Santiago, who had frequently tangled with Paredes over differences of opinion and sought the VFAComm's abolition because its functions supposedly overlapped with those of the Legislative Oversight Committee on the VFA (Lovfa) which she chairs.

"That's the honorable thing to do. If his conscience does not allow him to use the administration line, he will simply have to get out of government because he's an appointive government official," she said in an interview.

The senator, however, offered a theory on Paredes' resignation. "Either he was asked to resign or threatened with termination."

"If he wants to cross swords with the administration, he has to resign and join the opposition. There he can ventilate his opinion and policy with freedom," she added.

Paredes met with Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita on Friday to relay his decision to quit and recalled saying his farther stay in office was "untenable" be-

3 SENATORS, A4

YOUNG DEVOTEES
Two children help devotees wipe their scarves and towels on the image of the Black Nazarene in front of the Quiapo Church. The 400th anniversary of the Black Nazarene will be celebrated tomorrow.

RP loss, US gain: Did nurse Elmer do right?

NEW YORK—THE HOSPITAL LOBBY IS a blur of surgical scrubs as a shift change approaches. But when Elmer Jacinto slips in early in pressed whites and sneakers, he draws barely a glance from the guard behind the security desk.

It's 2:15 p.m. and soon he'll begin preparing IV drips and checking temperatures, tasks assigned to an entry-level nurse. Except for the fact that he's one of only two male nurses on the floor at St. Vincent's Midtown Hospital, he's just one of the girls.

Well, here, anyway.

But a world away, in his native Philippines, Jacinto remains at the center of a roiling controversy—a sellout to his critics, a paragon of hard work and admirable ambition to his supporters.

Once upon a time, Elmer Jacinto was the Philippines' most promising young doctor. But doctors in his homeland are

RP LOSS, A17

DOCTOR-TURNED-NURSE Elmer Jacinto does his hospital rounds.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Second FRONTPAGE

MONDAY, JANUARY 8, 2007

WEATHER FORECAST

RP: Summit to make Asean relevant

By Christine O. Avendaño

DESPITE CRITICISMS OVER THE RELEVANCE of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean), the Philippine government is hopeful this year's summit would see the 10-member regional grouping working closer to further strengthen the association.

"All the Asean member countries as well as our dialogue partners are committed to making this year a moment of glory for regional stability and security," Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said yesterday.

In keeping with this year's summit theme of a "One Caring, One Sharing Community," Bunye said all Southeast and East Asian countries were prepared to unite and work on their problems that includes "imbalances in trade, poverty, environmental degradation, conflict and insecurity, terrorism, transnational crime and other issues that affect a region that spans half the world."

Asean leaders and their East Asian dialogue partners are headed to Cebu this week for the Jan. 13-15 meetings which were postponed last month due to an approaching typhoon.

But Singaporean official had warned that Asean must change or become irrelevant.

Singapore's Deputy Prime Minister B. Jayakumar said Asean as an organization must reinvent itself or it "will atrophy and become marginalized."

Critics accuse the disparate group—without members comparable to wealthy Singapore to rise (impossible) communist states of Laos—of being a "talking shop" that accomplishes little.

"Up to now, it has been a talking shop," said Rizqun Bawazir of Think Centre, a Singapore-based international organization.

Walking sharp on a hard-hitting if they are talking about things of substance," chimed in Damien Kingsbury, an associate professor at Australia's Deakin University.

"But they don't talk about things in a constructive way or a way that is likely to lead to consequent further development."

The 40-year-old association has also been strongly criticized for its failure to act against abuses, especially those involving military-ruled member Burma (Myanmar).

Asean, founded in August 1967, comprises the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Brunei, Vietnam, Burma, Laos and Cambodia.

At Cebu, the bloc aims to sign a deal that would accelerate the formation of an Asean single market to fight off competition from China.

Asean sees the target date for the single market advanced to 2012. (Until 2020, but analysts have noted that the region faces challenges in making a European-style single market.)

"It's still a dream," Asean Secretary General Ong Keng Yong admitted.

Critics also say Asean's other related principle of noninterference runs counter to each other's internal affairs leaders in effectiveness.

"It will only further hobbling step...we have to use the ability to bring all the 10 countries together every once in a while," Ong said in Asean's defense. "We speak frankly and express our fears about certain things."

Sumanto Anggoro, of the University of Indonesia's Department of International Studies, said Asean is important for Indonesia but he was "somewhat disappointed" at the pace of institutional building within Asean.

That could change if more adopts the draft of a proposed legally binding charter which would be a radical departure from Asean's noninterventionist principle.

The draft is to be presented at the Cebu summit.

"The key objectives they need this charter," Santoso said.

Ong said the charter would be a signal that "Hey, these guys are quite serious," and would create an end to quotations about Asean irrelevance.

Philippine authorities have ramped up security for this week's summits, saying a terror attack could not be ruled out although there was no specific threat.

So far as no issues there is no specific threat against the summit itself, but per latest can related anything out," Sec. Silvestre Bello, who is leading the massive security operation for the summit, told AFP.

He said some 4,000 military personnel and 6,000 police were now in place in Cebu.

From Jan. 10 until Jan. 16, he said, a 32-kilometer no-fly zone will be enforced around the Mactan airport and the main summit venues of Cebu City and Lapu-Lapu City to which the 9,000 Philippine travel where the 10 Asean leaders will be billeted.

"The Philippine Navy will patrol the waters around Cebu and Mactan to prevent terrorists all set movements," Alonso added. With AFP reports

'Third force' shaping up for May polls

By Michael Lim Ubac

THE FORMATION OF A "THIRD force" composed of opposition leaders—and erstwhile supporters, at institutionalists in the Senate, of President Macapagal-Arroyo is now in the works.

Senate Majority Leader Francis Pangilinan, a stalwart of the Liberal Party (LP) allied with the latter of Sen. Franklin Drilon, and Sonia Roco, the widow of the late presidential candidate Raul Roco, both told the Inquirer yesterday that the Senate's critics were now negotiating for a common slate in the May 14 polls.

The LP-Drilon wing, the Nacionalista Party (NP) of Manuel Villar, Roco's Aksyon Demokratiko and the Lakas ng Demokratikong Pilipino (LDP) have been talking the past months, according to Pangilinan and Roco's widow.

Mr. Roco confirmed that she had been approached by a top Palace emissary to join the administration slate, but added: "How can I? Raul's last public statement was 'Ebreto nunga, cadi anup.'" (Ilocano for "Erase nunga, cadi anup.")

But former Sen. Loren Legarda and House Deputy Minority Leader Alan Peter Cayetano were both lukewarm to the proposal, saying a fractious opposition could prove favorable to the administration.

Cayetano said that however "we wouldn't" the Makabayang bandidistrict senatorial candidacies may be, they would have an edge when pitted against a divided opposition.

"We should have one ticket, one line, one vision," said Legarda.

Pangilinan, LP's party chairman, explained that the opposition of having a third force," is to establish the broadest coalition committed to ensuring that the Senate as an institution remains independent and vigilant."

"There are no final plans yet," he said, but added "there are no serious objections from the incumbent senators so far. Some have even expressed support for the concept." With a report from Christina O. Avendaño

Senators seek extra ₱10B to help Bicol storm victims

By TJ Burgonio

SEN. RALPH RECTO YESTERDAY sought the initiation of ₱10 billion for the rehabilitation of the typhoon-battered Bicol region in the ₱1.126-trillion 2007 proposed national budget.

Recto, colleagues Sens. Juan Ponce Enrile, and the Senate and House of Representatives were keen on passing a supplemental budget for this purpose.

"If we're on time in helping the Bicol region, we should include this in the 2007 budget. There's little time to pass a supplemental budget for the rehabilitation of the region," Recto, chair of the committee on ways and means, said in an interview.

"Recovery can only begin if the budget is committed. So other people suffer more from in delay than the Bicolanos," he added in a statement.

The rehabilitation of Bicol, he said, should be a "strong argument" for the bicameral conference committee to break the impasse on the national budget and pass it before Congress adjourns on Feb. 9 for its July-to-December break.

Reinstated talks on the budget were suspended in December after the Senate and House panels failed to agree on whether to retain the ₱4.5 billion fund for the Department of Agrarian Reform's dividing program, or realign it to cut down on the shortages in Arroyo's top calamity-hit areas.

The draft is to be presented at the Cebu summit.

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"The Philippine Navy will patrol the waters around Cebu and Mactan to prevent terrorists all set movements," Alonso added. With AFP reports

Port of Manila exceeds collection target by ₱5.2B

THE PORT OF MANILA (POM) raised total revenues of ₱51.17 billion last year, exceeding its collection target by ₱5.19 billion, Finance Undersecretary Romulo B Sumaang reported yesterday.

Cash collections accounted for 98 percent of the port's revenue take from duties and taxes on imports at the South Harbor and seaports. Inbound payments (arrastre payment) and revenue paid with tax credits (Direct payment) comprised the rest of the Port of Manila collections.

In a press statement, Sumaang said last year's cash collection was 28 percent higher, or ₱18.27 billion more than that of 2005, despite the continuing tariff reduction program, the higher rate of nonrefundable imports, more tax credit applications, the increase in deferred payments by government agencies and the lower foreign exchange rate.

The Port of Manila contributes 50 percent to the total revenue collected by the Customs Bureau, Sumaang said. The remaining 50 percent of the bureau's take comes from 11 collection districts nationwide.

OFW suspect in ward's death

KUWAIT CITY—A DOMESTIC worker from the Philippines was suspected yesterday of killing her employer's 7-year-old son by slitting his throat, a police source said.

The woman allegedly jumped from the second story of her employer's house and her fellow also claiming the throat of the boy's 11-year-old brother and stabbing his 37-year old sister, the source said.

The domestic worker and the two older children who survived the attack were rushed to a hospital, where they were all reported to be in serious condition.

The motive was not immediately known, but the source said the Filipina woman—who had been in Kuwait for only six months—had quarreled with her employers.

Her identity and hometown were not immediately known.

More than 70,000 Filipinos live and work in oil-rich Kuwait, mostly as maids and construction workers. AFP

Valera snubs police invite in slay case

THE POLICE WILL NOT BE GETTING any answers from Atty Gre. Vicente Valera on the Fernando day-care surprise soon.

Dr. Fredie Valera formally turned down an invitation from the task force formed to investigate Atty. Lolo Fernando's murder at Sb. Samuel Church to appear before it.

Quezon City Police District Investigation and Detective Management director Supt. Oscar Peñalosa said on Saturday that Valera refused an invitation from QCPD Criminal Investigation Unit head Supt. Franklin Mabunay.

"It is with deep regret that I cannot yet honor your invitation with my presence..." said Valera.

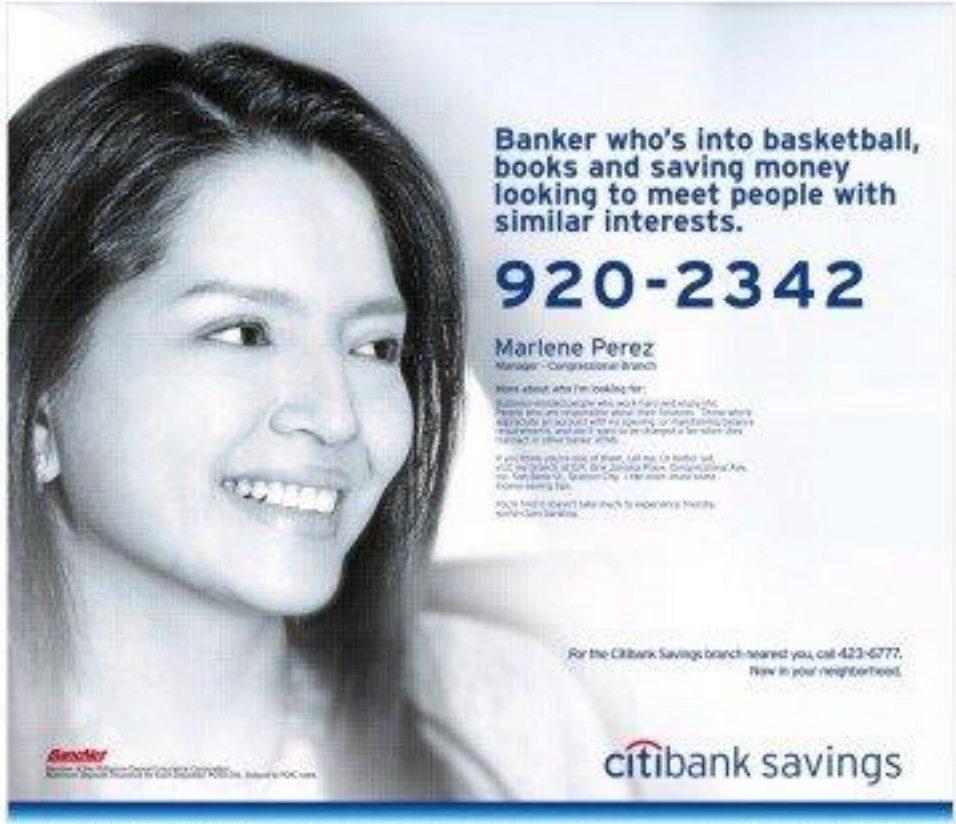
Valera said he had also been advised by his lawyers "to give any statements or assessments only in their presence and at the appropriate time and forum."

Police, meanwhile, said the police were "slowly closing in" on the other suspects in the Fernando murder.

Police said that while former soldier Rufino Pandoy, a suspect, had provided police with enough leads to solve the case, the arrest of the other suspects could break the case wide open.

On Dec. 29, Valera's Chevrolet Suburban SUV was flagged down by police on Commonwealth Avenue for having no license plates and using a siren.

Seven firearms were found in the vehicle and Valera was charged with illegal possession of firearms. Alexis Romero



Long lines at Naia irk foreign airlines

[illegible]

gers," government authorities should ensure that services and the facilities would respond efficiently.

"There's a congestion at the airport. But this happens every year. Our point is, there should be better services and facilities should be improved," Ed Monreal, AOC executive, said the increase in an interview.

Monreal said that Cathay Pacific alone counted a total delay of 124 minutes at the immigration counter and 19 minutes because of the baggage belt's failure on Jan. 1-4.

Few officers at counters

AOC chair Lourdes Nakpil said that Cathay Pacific had experienced an hourlong flight delay while other flights had a maximum of 30-minute flight delays due to the congestion at immigration counters.

Nakpil said that airlines had requested only a few immigration officers manning the counters at the immigration departure despite the increased volume of passengers.

"As we speak, the lines are very long at the counters and I counted only seven immigration officers," Nakpil said she had met the seven in a phone interview shortly after noon on Saturday.

Ferdinand Sampid, head supervisor of the Naia Bureau of Immigration, admitted that the queues were longer now as the departure immigration of Naia 1 for also until noon officers were being assigned to Naia 3 on their own.

"We anticipated that there will be an increased number of passengers but we did not expect that it would be this much," he said, pointing out fully booked flights seemed to be departing all the time.

As for the defective conveyor belt at Naia's west baggage holding area, the AOC complained that it had broken down three times after a new installation repair during the holiday season.

"It is definitely affecting our operations," Monreal said.

13,808 passengers daily

AOC officials pointed out that the manual handling resorted to during the emergency delayed the purpose of having a sanitized baggage because a third party—the person loading the bags in the holding area—has already touched the bags.

Dynamic Line, Miss operations chief, admitted the delay in the completion of the baggage conveyor belt repair which was outsourced to a contractor. "It's still in initial operation after the refurbishment. It's still adjusting," Dino said in a phone interview.

In a statement, the Miss has advised departing passengers to check in early for their flights because of the passenger congestion at the airport terminals. The Miss anticipates 13,000 passengers to depart from the Naia daily this month.

'Distressed' plane denied to land due to GMA flight

By Nikko Dizon

WHICH SHOULD BE GIVEN PRIORITY ON the runway: A Lexjet taking off with President Macapagal-Arroyo on board or an inbound hapless Saudi Airlines 340 burying 221 passengers due in morning lines on fuel?

This was the question posed by an official of the Airline Operators Council (AOC) after a Gulf Air flight from Bahrain was reportedly stopped from landing at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Naia) because Mr Arroyo was using the runway for her flight to Davao City on Wednesday to attend as a wedding sponsor.

The AOC also is complaining about long queues at the departure immigration counters and a delay in baggage delivery due to the latest bombshell flights. (See story on Page 6A.)

"Even if the 8-minute's plane was already taxiing but the pilot [of the other aircraft] declared he was low on fuel, the latter should have been allowed to land," Lourdes Nakpil, AOC chair and Gulf Air executive chief in Manila, told reporters.

Distress call

It is, by all means and purposes, already considered a "distress call" for an emergency landing, Nakpil said.

Nakpil said the Air Transportation Office (ATO) should explain why flight GF 154 was not allowed to land. It was also told that it was slack in how the landing. (The Bahrain airlines had failed to reach ATO chief Nilo Jarlos for comment yesterday.)

The pilot then decided to divert flight GF 154 to the Subic/Clark/Pampanga International Airport (SBMA) at Clark field in Pampanga. At this point, Nakpil said, GF 154 technically became a "missing plane" for 15 minutes, the time when the aircraft was reportedly refuelled for landing at the SBMA.

"I thought it was only diverted because of the presidential movements, until (retired) Gen. (Angel) Avendaño (airport security chief) called me speaking when GF 154 was," Nakpil said.

Local office not notified

Some allies, Nakpil said, Gulf Air Manila received an "operations flash" from its headquarters in Bahrain that GF 154 had "diverted to the DMIA due to a presidential movement." (An aircraft is equipped with a device that sends a signal to its headquarters on its location, Nakpil explained.)

"There was confusion. Nobody told us that the aircraft had diverted to Clark. Not even the Mina Dilanda International Airport Authority] knew the flight was diverted," Nakpil said.

So was somewhere not to endangering the lives of all the passengers and crew. What if the plane [on fuel and crashed]?" an irate Nakpil said.

"The pilot said the air traffic controller was actually very accommodating. But considerate, somehow, his request was suddenly denied supposedly because the runway was closed for Presidents Arroyo's flight," Nakpil said.

Mr Arroyo left that afternoon on board the Lear jet for Davao to stand in one of the principal sponsors in the wedding of the son of House Majority Leader Prospero Nograles.

Landing at the DMIA for refueling and going back to the Malacañang Gulf Air having to file a new flight plan and also pay for landing fees, among other things to be done.

Its protocol and security systems, the Malacañang says are geared when there is a presidential movement.

Nakpil insisted that international airlines rules dictate that regardless of whether there is a VIP movement, emergency situations are also given priority.

"An aircraft running low on fuel is considered an emergency situation," he said.

The airport was to under the NFDA jurisdiction.

Nevertheless, a Miss official said the airport authority is also investigating the incident.

Nakpil said that usually the presidential flight should have given way to the distressed aircraft.

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No important . . .

From page A1

Following her election as the first woman Speaker of the House, Pelosi said, "The election of 2006 was a call to change—not merely to change control of Congress, but for a new direction of our country. Nowhere were the American people more clear about the direction they in fact. The American people rejected incompetence, cronyism and a war without end."

Pelosi lauded the House of Representatives that the Democrats have taken control of for the first time since 1994, winning final November a close majority with 233 seats to 202 Republicans.

The Democrats regained control of both houses of Congress, after wandering in the political wilderness for 12 years. They held the discount of majorities, in the Senate, 51 to 49, but this did not stop them from passing Bush on issues that their commanding majority in the House allows them to set the agenda during the last two years of the Bush presidency.

Pivotal position

Their captain of Congress past Pelosi in the pivotal position of setting the agenda. She is poised to run for the presidency, after Vice President Richard Cheney.

Pelosi has shunted aside the anchored lieutenancy of Nancy Cunderman Rice, reported to be the most powerful woman in the United States prior to the Democratic sweep in the midterm elections.

After receiving the Speaker's gavel with a standing ovation, Pelosi said, "I accept this gavel for the spirit of partnership not partisanship, and look forward to working with you on behalf of the American people."

Although Bush acknowledged his fellow Republicans had received a "thumping" in the elections, and had pledged to find common ground with the Democrats, saying that "It's time to set aside politics and focus on the future."

Despite the talk about a desire for "bipartisanship" and pledge to "rise above partisan differences," the spirit of conciliation had rapidly evaporated by the New Year.

While Bush is regarded as a "consensus builder," Bush has been seen as a divisive president, who ignored the Democratic minority when the Republicans were dominant during his first term and the first half of his second.

Far from chastened

Bush now has to negotiate with the Democratic majority under circumstances he is not used to, and he appears far from chastened by the Republican defeat. The one to beg, one the main issue that turned the American voters away from the Republicans, and looms as the main issue that divides Bush and the Democrats.

Rather than heeding the Democrats' call for a timetable to withdraw, Bush's plan to increase US troops in Iraq, not only reversed the bitter taste and the disillusion of the defeat over Iraq, but also provoked an early collision with the Democratic majority.

Thomas Mann, congressional scholar for the Washington think tank Brookings, said Bush had already suffered irreparable loss of political power.

"His approval elevation in range 33 factors in Iraq will be wildly unpopular in the country and in Congress," Mann said. "The running battles are likely to diminish any chance of cooperation on domestic issues."

Most divisive President

Washington based journalists see no bipartisanship developing over Iraq. As one commentator observed, "Bush is perhaps the most divisive president in recent American history, and Iraq is the key issue confronting the US. The divisions between Bush and congressional Democrats remain intense and irreconcilable."

The 2006 US midterm elections pointed to the opportunities for change in a political system like ours, which is modeled on the US presidential system.

The midterm elections scheduled for May in the Philippines offer opportunities for policy change and a fresh mandate for the Arroyo administration.

Ms Arroyo's survival

President Macapagal-Arroyo's tenure is not directly at issue in May, but two critical exercises involved—the survival of her regime until 2010 when she must have served her full term, and control of the House.

Without policy issues—foreign and economic policy or even small-scale change—it is unlikely. It is unlike the 2006 US midterm elections, which were decided by the unending Iraq issue and by the corruption scandals in the Republican-dominated Congress.

No issue divides the Philippine political parties in May. So we should not think in terms of bipartisanship but in terms of multipartisanship of parties aligned along presidential-election and opposition coalitions.

We, therefore, should not expect important policy shifts from the May elections.

Vindictiveness

Opposition forces are planning a campaign of political destabilization that seeks to control the House of Representatives, the vital battleground of the elections.

The aim is to seize control of the House to set the stage for the impeachment of Ms Arroyo, who has survived two impeachment complaints during the past two years with the help of her allies who form the majority in the House.

In this respect, the May elections are a supremely defined political exercise aimed at nothing more than cutting short Ms Arroyo's term.

It will not even decide the immediate prospects of constitutional change, a key policy initiative of the administration.

A change of control of Congress will not have any bearing on economic policies involving growth and financial reforms that have tackled the fiscal deficit over the past two years.

Some instant heroes find fame unbearable

From page A1

Then came the outland TV interviews, the late-night show monologues, the offers to do commercials, the free trip to Disney World.

Then came the nightmares resulting from his near-death plunge. He retreated to work after the Disney World trip only to get harassed about his absence and quit. He lost his health insurance, the money ran out, and he started drinking heavily.

"My life unraveled. The publicity changed my life. I didn't want it to," said Hunter, who still lives in modestly brave the words "the bridge jumper" from strangers on the street. "I had my 15 minutes of fame and I was yesterday's news. I didn't care, but it took me four or five years to get my life back."

New hero crowned

Jansen recalled his experience on Fri. day as Scott Norb crowned a new hero—the man who drove in front of a Manhattan subway train Tuesday to save a teenager, one of the city's most amazing acts of heroism in recent memory.

Hunter then, home has accompanied subway rescuer Wesley Autrey every where he has gone.

The 50-year-old construction worker soon accolades made as "the hero of Harlem" and "Subway Superman," appeared on David Letterman and accepted money and other gifts—including a trip to Disney World. Mayor Michael Bloomberg bestowed him with the city's highest civic award, the Bronze Medallion; past recipients included Gen. Douglas MacArthur.

As finales can attest, though, these are changes in becoming an overnight hero in a media-saturated society.

"They go one of two ways. They either recognize that their act was a moment in time they can enjoy time passed by and the rest of their life is a consequence of everyday realities—or they get stuck in their shoes in action, lives stalled and lose perspective. That's the danger," said Alan Hiller, chief psychologist at Brooklyn's Maimonides Medical Center.

'Been there, done that'

Joseph Dunwald are only 17 when he did about the same thing as Autrey, he leaped off a Manhattan subway platform to rescue a man who had fainted and fallen onto the tracks.

"Been there, done that," Dunwald, now 61, said while watching history on TV.

Dunwald, a retired New York firefighter who lives in Lake Mary, Florida, said the moment and the public attention "changed my persona. It was a new level of responsibility, a peep course for what was about to happen—dealing Germans submarines in World War II."

It was, he said, "a great responsibility for life"—a happy, healthy life he chose the spotlight.

For his efforts, Dunwald also got a gold Bulova watch as a reward, and "baby, did I ever get lots of dates."

Another overnight hero who received, of mid the glow was Felix Sinquez, a New York City housing employee who caught an infant thrown from a burning apartment in December 2005.

"I just went hands to work like nothing happened. But people kept calling," said Sinquez, who also received the Bronze Medallion from the mayor.

At the time, he was in the middle of a divorce and custody mess. "and I became a better person. People started noticing me, and saying for—nonexisting me," said the 48-year-old father of three, speaking from the stairwell of a house he using development where he supervises janitors.

Autrey has resisted to take his instant celebrity in stride, telling his act the only decent thing to have done.

"How are you going to walk by someone who's ill and just look—Oh, well, I'm busy, I've got to go to work?" Autrey said.

Personality change

Rewind a decade.

"When you see somebody in the water like that, hopeless, and you're afraid they're going to drown, you're going to do something to help them or that's what I did," Santos, then a volunteer firefighter, said in the days after his plunge from the Tappan Zee Bridge.

Santos' troubles piled up quickly, however. On top of losing his job, a TV network documentary on his life, showing him of his or etching to his "exclusive" interview soured. Everyone wanted him on the set.

"My personality changed," he recalled.

Santos, now 33, still lives near the bridge, north of New York City. He works as a plumber and is engaged.

One afternoon when I job fell through, he missed the old firefighter friends he could with helping him get back in control. "They're the guys who were there for me when I went from being a superstar to being nobody, and they're still there for me now," he said, speaking by phone from the firehouse.

To this day, he is "petrified" of heights. "I fell, he climbs the 50 Sconces ladder of a fire truck, "even if I'm rescuing." The woman he rescued still occasionally calls him from Connecticut, where she lives.

He had some advice for Autrey: "It's going to take time, but try not to change, try to continue doing the same thing as before."

AP

AFP modernization drive sputters

By Inquirer

do have a military-looking tank, as well as a few handheld rocket-launched M-16 rifles for firepower, a few night-vision goggles for increased visibility, and for communications, mostly personal cell phones loaded with prepaid cards for limited use.

Apart from that, "we rely on God's will, our training and sometimes sense to protect us," says one Army commander. So the soldiers continue to believe "we will win this war" against the Communist Party of the Philippines and the New People's Army, which are waging Asia's longest-running insurgency.

By now, the Armed Forces of the Philippines should have been a modern, professional force capable of dealing with both external threats and internal security concerns. In December 1996, Congress approved Joint Resolution No. 20 in which both the Senate and House of Representatives gave their blessings to Republic Act No. 7898, known as the AFP Modernization Act.

The law envisioned a professionalized armed force, as well as "the acquisition and upgrading of appropriate technology and equipment" to bring the AFP into the 21st century.

Magnet for grab

Ten years and more than P11 billion later, there has been very little actual acquisition of new equipment for the AFP. Government auditors and budget officials have found that there are weak controls over funds of the AFP, whether for modernization or not, such as those provided by peacekeeping forces or "Balikatan" exercises.

Procurement officials likewise say the AFP has shown a disregard for procurement processes provided by law. As a result, the multibillion-peso AFP budget, its modernization fund included, has been a magnet for graft and corruption.

What has instead happened is that the modernization program, whose core component is capability enhancement, has turned into one of repair and refurbishment, with a huge chunk of the funds being spent on repairs from the office supplies.

"I cannot consider that AFP modernization," said Sec. Rafik B. Banias, a retired AFP chief of staff who coauthored the AFP modernization law in the Senate.

In its present state, Banias said, the AFP "is not capable of addressing the insurgency threats" from the CPP-NPA and the Moro secessionists.

Still in Square One

The government panel tasked to acknowledges that the AFP Modernization Program (AFPMP) is still where it was 10 years ago—in square one. Last year, the Department of National Defense tallied off an 18-year plan called the Capability Upgrade Program (CUP), which takes over the equipment procurement functions of the AFPMP.

Under the CUP, the AFP will get P1 billion every year from its regular budget appropriations, for the next 18 years.

Defense and AFP officials acknowledge that the early years of the AFPMP were difficult ones. "The program was launched in 1997 at the height of the Asian financial crisis, with a budget of P50 billion for the first five years—or P10 billion a year—yet and above what the AFP would receive from the Genera al Appropriations. The focus for modernization was supposed to come from the AFP's share of proceeds from the lease and sale of former military camps and the income from the government owned.

But during President Fidel V. Ramos' term, no funds were made available from the AFPMP fund, revelation. It was only in 2000, under the administration of President Joseph Estrada, that the modernization started receiving income from the sale of Fort Bonifacio. And only in 2002 did Congress allocate funds for the AFPMP.

As of 2005, the total amount of money that had gone into the program stood at P11.8 billion, the bulk of which came from the lease of military property, disposal of AFP assets and congressional allocations.

At the time the AFP Modernization Law was passed, the AFP's principal function was "to uphold the sovereignty and preserve the territorial integrity of the Republic of the Philippines." The law had a different tone in mind—external issues threatening Philippine territory, including the disputed Spratly Islands. The task of fighting the communist insurgency and other internal threats was the responsibility of the then newly created Philippine National Police.

But the internal threats—the communist insurgency, the Abu Sayyaf and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front—proved too much for the PNP to handle. This forced a revision of the AFP's priorities from external defense to internal security.

Unimplemented

This rules-using of priorities also resulted in several changes in the AFPMP priority projects, which were revised at least three times—in 2000, 2003 and 2004 with the drafting of the Integrated Priority Projects List. The congress modernized another time around with the CUP.

In its annual report for 2005, the Commission on Audit found that out of 40 priority projects worth P16 billion scheduled for implementation by Dec. 31, 2005, only 14 projects worth P3.2 billion were completed. Eight projects worth P2 billion were ongoing while 20 projects worth nearly P6 billion remained unimplemented at the time.

The COA said the AFP's "failure to undertake the AFP modernization fund resulted in the delayed implementation" of the projects "... and will greatly affect its primary objective to modernize the AFP to a level where it can effectively and fully perform its mandate."

As of the end of 2006, the program had received P50 billion, and 20 more, worth P6 billion, still in the procurement process.

In the early years, AFP and defense officials cited a lack of funds and the cumbersome procurement process as among the reasons for the slow AFP modernization.

Even the Bolanos Commission, which investigated the complaints of allegations young officers who took part in what is now known as the Oakwood mutiny of July 2003, found out so much "Procurement under the AFP Modernization Program is even lengthier and more complex than the ordinary AFP procurement process," it said.

21 steps

The commission noted that it took the AFP 23 steps to procure weapons and other defense equipment—from the Secretary of the Department of National Defense (DND-SND), to the bidding and award, and to project implementation.

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Military says Reds won't be able to collect campaign fees

By Alcuin Papa

THE ARMED FORCES OF THE PHILIPPINES said it would thwart any efforts by the communist New People's Army (NPA) to collect "permit to campaign" fees from politicians during the May elections.

AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon said the military had already received reports that the NPA was planning to collect "permit to campaign" fees in the areas under its control this coming May.

"We hope to be able to control the collection of permit to campaign fees. We will discuss with the Philippine National Police and other law enforcement agencies to counter its illegal activity," Esperon said.

The NPA collects the fees from politicians who want to campaign in areas where they hold sway.

Esperon urged candidates not to pay campaign fees to the NPA.

"We should not be paying fees to an armed group that is here on ransoming [money] from the people. From the candidates. If and/or aiding on probable candidates not to pay permits to campaign fees to the NPA," said Esperon.

The AFP and the PNP have been also directed by the Commission on Elections (Comelec) to enforce the gun ban during the election period.

According to Esperon, the military and police can also be called on in cases of the "presence of a strong armed threat" in any locality.

Meanwhile, an election official said that military personnel who recently registered as voters would only be allowed to vote for senators and party-list representatives and only inside their camps.

Polling precincts in military camps would also have poll watchers and would be placed under the supervision of boards of election inspectors (BEIs) constituted by the Comelec. With a report from Amy A. Oshima, Inquirer Visayas

Photojournalist D. Baldovino; 69

RAMOS PHOTOJOURNALIST DICK BALDOVINO passed away on Saturday at his Quezon City home after a lingering illness. He was 69.

Richard "Dick-dee" Baldovino was a key figure in the development of photography in the country. Image could no problematic or graphic art.

He was among the first Filipino photojournalists to use state-of-the-art equipment and available light to portray exposed everyday subjects in the medium of art. Female photographer Ernest Cortes-Bernabe called "the decisive moment."

His career as a freelance photographer began in 1960, when the script-writing scandal-ridden him to take photographs for the Manila Chronicle magazine. He earned a reputation for his stunning portraits of the country's first National Artists.

In 1963, Baldovino joined The Asia Magazine, the Hong Kong-based regional supplement of leading English-language newspaper. He undertook photographic assignments in Europe, the Middle East, Southeast Asia, China, Japan, Indochina, Australia, Canada, Guam and Hawaii.

In the 1970s, Baldovino diversified into advertising, films, and art books.

His remains lie at St. Peter's Chapel on Quezon Boulevard corner Doral Chambers in Quezon City. Cremation is scheduled at the Loyola Memorial Gardens on Dec. 13.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Monday, January 8, 2007

1st Reading: Is 40:1-5, 9-11
2nd Reading: Ti 2:11-14; 3:4-7
Gospel: Luke 3:15-16, 21-22

The people were wondering about John's identity, "could he be the Messiah?" Then John answered them, "I baptize you with water, but the one who is coming will do much more. He will baptize you with Holy Spirit and fire. As for me, I am not worthy to untie his sandal."

Now, with all the people who came to be baptized, Jesus too was baptized. Then, while he was praying, the heavens opened. the Holy Spirit in visible form upon him in the visible form of a dove and a voice from heaven was heard, "You are my Son, the one I love. Happiness you."

Commentary

By anointed, our people! We are schooled from boyhood, proud! Look, even the earth responds to this event: valleys raised up, mountains brought low, the way smoothed out, and glory everywhere. How we cry out, "Here is your God!" He is a shepherd, tender with the young, a leader who carries his own. And remember when, amid our human misery on

By baptism, we are now made holy in God. We are saved by the mercy of God, that is the pattern of Jesus came into our world, and he made us participate in his life. Is it Trinity. The people were speechless and the Father declares, "You are my Son, this day I have begotten you." Today we too are baptized of God and the Father declares, "You are my daughter my son."

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Spare the trees, poll bets urged

By Delfin T. Mallari Jr.
Inquirer Southern Luzon

LUCENA CITY—PETE TIO ELECTION season is the air, a national environmentalist group has asked politicians not to post campaign materials and streamers on trees.

"For the sake of the environment, please spare the trees. The trees cannot express to the trees which could affect their growth," said lawyer Ana Pena, executive director of Tanggol Kalikasan, a public interest legal defense center.

Pena said trees and maple were candidates' wounds on trees.

"They could die from these infections. Trees are like people," she said.

Posters and streamers of politicians bearing holiday greetings had mushroomed all over the Maharlika Highway in Luzon. Most of these had been nailed to concrete and other fruit trees.

Pena said candidates should abide by follow the election law.

The law prohibits the posting of campaign materials in public areas outside designated common poster areas. It also bans the posting of campaign materials on trees, bridges, public structures or buildings, electric posts, schools, churches and along main roads.

The law, however, is usually ignored by campaign workers who nail or hide election paraphernalia on trees and other prohibited materials without fear of being sanctioned by the Commission on Elections.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources reported a sudden increase in the number of tree infections six months after the end of the election period in May 2004.

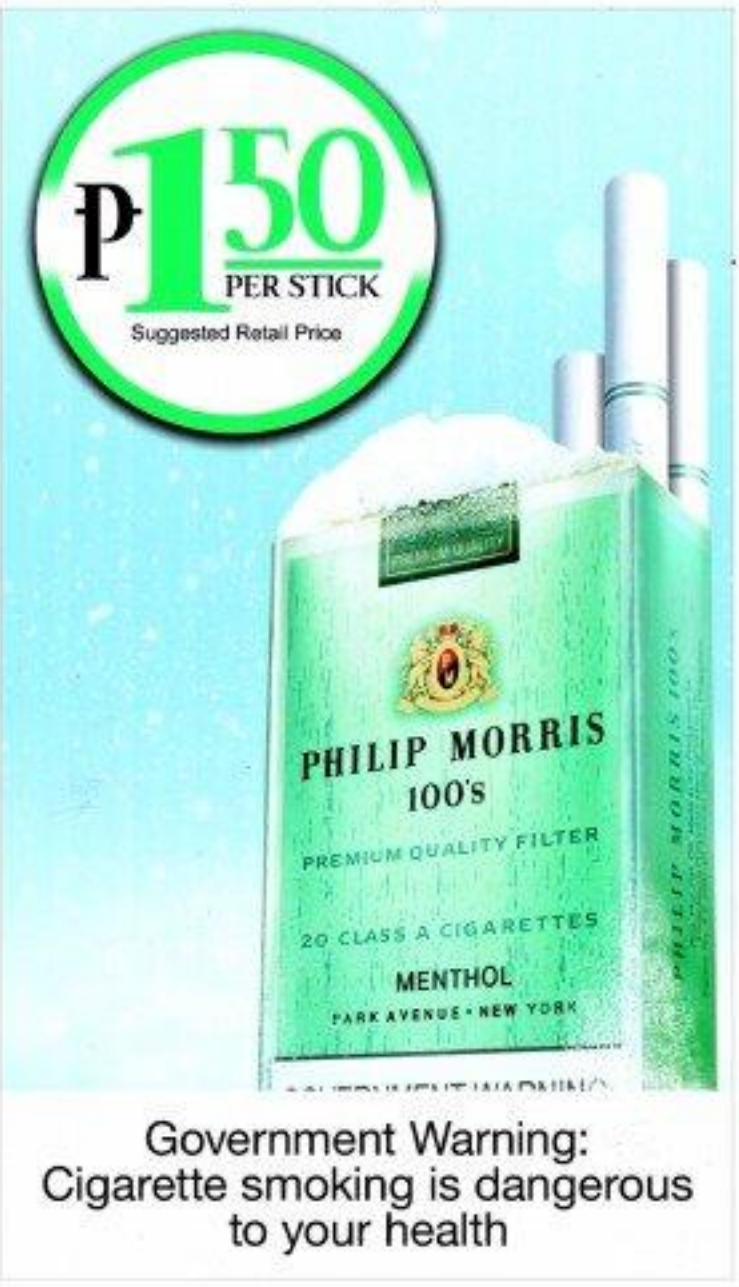
Tanggol Kalikasan had also asked candidates to use recycled paper for their campaign materials.

"Our forests are dying. The candidates should lead in the preservation of the remaining forested areas," said Glenn Rother, Tanggol Kalikasan's program officer.

The group, environmental groups in the country will assess the track records of politicians, both national and local. We will campaign hard against those involved in forest destruction," Rother said.

Under the Omnibus Election Code, the campaign period for candidates aspiring for national positions as well as for political parties, organizations and coalitions participating in the party-list system will run from Feb. 12 to May 12. The period for candidates vying for congressional, provincial and municipal seats will run from March 30 to May 12.

The Comelec said the earliest practice of candidates and incumbent officials putting up streamers with their names and greetings on them could not be considered electioneering because the period for the filing of certificates of candidacy had not yet started.



2 senators praise VFA official for quitting

From page A1

over his position on counter to the administration's.

President annoyed

Pandeo had charged that the executive branch "took the law into its hands" when it whisked him out of the Makati City Jail in the US Embassy on Dec. 29 at close to midnight before the appellate court could rule on his custody case.

He also assailed the Court of Appeals ruling as "neither here nor there."

Shields was convicted of raping a young Filipino woman, sentenced to life imprisonment and ordered detained by a judge at the Makati City Jail on Dec. 4.

A Malacañang official said President Macapagal-Arroyo had been annoyed by Pandeo's criticism of the transfer and decided to let him go.

"There are no implications whatsoever," Soriano Arroyo said when asked about the effect of Pandeo' outspoken on RP-US ties, reiterating what he said on radio earlier in the morning.

When asked if Pandeo was the latest casualty in the JOVS (out-of-war crossfinish), the senator tersely said: "Not really. To begin with, policy direction is obtained by Malacañang. As executive (force), he merely implements policy."

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HONORS of the Philippine Marine's group Aviation Group rumor from up the pictures of Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno, Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez, President Macapagal-Arroyo, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita and Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo during a rally at UP Diliman in protest of the US custody of convicted rapist Lance Cpl. Daniel Smith.

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Indon JI terrorist slain . . .

From page A1

member, Abu Hafalda, and two key aides of Janjalani and prominent Abu Sayyaf commander Abu Sulaimon—Reuddin Hassan and Gafur Abdulsalam—were also killed in Saturday's clash. Two date trees were mistook dead.

Troops recovered from the encounter site an M-203 grenade launcher and huge amounts of ammunition on the rebels' boat, Marine spokesperson Lt. Col. Arlel Cacatian said.

Troops were pursuing the militants but they managed to flee from Jolo two days ago. Marines spotted and engaged the group Saturday in a firefight off Tawi-Tawi, he said.

Kidnappings planned

An officer involved in the assault said the military had information that the militants were planning to ramp up kidnappings in Tawi-Tawi to raise funds. The officer spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to talk to the media.

More than 7,000 Army troops and Marines have been hunting the Abu Sayyaf's top leaders and allied Indonesian militants since Aug. 1 but have failed so far to find them. The military's deadline for the rebels' surrender was the most important achievements of that campaign, Cacatian said.

Janjalani was reportedly killed in a clash on Jolo in September and troops recovered what were believed to be his remains last month. US forensic experts are helping verify the identity of the badly scalded DNA tests. Reports from Alyssa Pope in Manila, Jodie G. Alipala, Inquirer Mindanao, and AP

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

OPINION

Who pays for UP?

EDITORIAL

IN AN IDEAL WORLD, A CLEAR-SIGHTED NATIONAL leadership will reserve a generous chunk of the government budget to meet all the needs of all the country's public education institutions. In that idyllic realm, grateful alumni will rep over each other to donate some money back to their university, perhaps to endow a professorial chair, or sponsor a forum, or fund a new research center. And—ideally—in that near-dream paradise, incoming students will eagerly sign a pledge to render public service in return for their publicly funded education.

Sadly for all of us, the world in which the state-owned University of the Philippines finds itself is far from ideal. By most accounts, the UP, the country's best school, is struggling to keep pace with the 21st century. A big part of the problem is financial: at a time when it should be recommitting on becoming one of Asia's great universities, it has to contend with diminishing state subsidies.

A big part of the solution lies in increasing income from tuition. Much has been said about the specifics and even the assumptions behind the proposal of UP president Danilo Concepcion to bring "tuition policy and structure" up to date—a proposal based on studies conducted by two committees, and approved by the UP Board of Regents on Dec. 15.

But much of the criticism against the tuition plan can be reduced to the following position: the very idea of sourcing income from public school students is abhorrent. As the chair of the UP student council said not too long ago: "They tell us that it's not the government's role to subsidize tertiary education, but we believe otherwise."

In an ideal world, we would share that article of faith, too. It is a dream right out of Plato: gather the best students, give them all they need to grow into open-minding citizens and outstanding leaders, and let the state, which after all is only providing for its own future, worry about the cost.

But in the real world, there ain't no such thing as a free education. We are the state; we entrust up the community of taxpayers and lenders; we do the worrying about costs.

And in our corner of the real world, only basic education is a constitutional right. We look forward to the day when our Constitution can mandate, and our level of economic development can afford, college education for all. But in the meantime, what do we do?

We must do what we can. That, it seems to us, is the main merit in the Roman plan: it recognizes the true extent of UP's financial constraints, studied the options in depth, and then mustered the political will to recommend viable but possibly unpopular courses of action.

The controversy over the tuition issue, it is easy to see, has obscured other efforts to preserve the funds UP needs. Tuition fee increases have always served as the entry-level issue for emerging student activists (even more so in private schools). But beyond that, the opposition from some highly entrenched academics from UP itself has provided public debate.

UP Prof. Roland Simbulan's powerful plea to study the matter further, published in the Inquirer several days ago, is characteristic of this opposition. It rushes for everything resulting but, on reflection, we find it is to be better if it ultimately based on an appeal to emotion: that a reasonable proposal based on a reasonable and in-force premise (both all UP students as "students at large"; that a subsidy-granting program's reasonable requirements for verification of financial resources (standard in modern-day transactions) is an unreasonable attack on privacy; that Roman's reasonable, real-world arguments are nothing but "rhetoric."

But Simbulan reminds the unpardonable: see himself. "Those who can afford should pay more. This is the principle on which the tuition increase is based. Are the families with an annual income of P81,000 up to P131,000 rich enough so that they shall raise pay P500 per unit plus full tuition from fees?"

Do you see it? His argument is based on a conflation of "can afford" with "rich enough." The Roman plan is based, in part, on the idea that this particular income bracket (among others) can afford to pay more; Simbulan's opposition is based, in part, on deliberately misleading that bracket (and others) as "not rich." In the real world, that kind of thinking has ushered consequences.

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Malacañang panicked on Smith case

PANIC. THAT WAS WHAT FORCED MALACAÑANG to hastily handle convicted rapist Lance Cpl. Daniel Smith from the Hukbo Clay Antiterrorism Battalion in the dead of night.

All the rules had been met in the Palace told are that the Palace got a tip that the Court of Appeals would reject the government petition ordering to overturn Judge Benjamin Pozon's decision denying US parole but even worth. It is also possible that the suggestion to transfer Smith before the decision could be handed out might have come from a justice.

Relocating was already handy, was the coordination by the Association of the Philippine Republic—coming in a 6 and 6 by the birth of many leaders and prisoners through diplomatic channels—as pushed against the continued incarceration of Smith in a Philippine jail. With the look that the government appeal would be rejected, President Malacañang Aurora practically called for a cabinet solution to an emergency meeting in the Palace.

"What can we do?" she asked them. The panic must have spread to her advisers, the little hand said. They were all aware what the United States and especially its angry President George W. Bush, could do to a small, poor Third World country like the Philippines.

The little hand does not remember who first suggested that Smith be spirited out of the Makati jail immediately, before the decision of the Court of Appeals. "If" and the suggestion might have originated from inside the Court of Appeals itself, for that is not sure of that fact.

Anyway, the group clustered around Executive Secretary "Wilkins" Ermita's desk. They decided to hasten a case and hand Smith to US authorities that same night.

They knew that what they were doing was wrong, that it violated the Constitution, the laws of the land, the Supreme Court, they also knew what an angry US government could do, openly or clandestinely, to the administration.

The ability of leaving the traffic in Christmas by transferring funds in the dead of night created only as it rains, the little hand said. But obviously Malacañang and Executive Secretary Ermita couldn't think of a better excuse.

As I See It

Neal H. Cruz

And so we have another case as serious as the discovery of the Cuneta tapes, just because a heavy American ill couldn't come of his libido.

The decision of the Court of Appeals is a perfect example of "unsurrender in deliberating (by) theorizing in two theory" or nothing (the former). Lawyers have a description term for it: "bailia."

The Court of Appeals agreed with Judge Pozon that, with the end of the trial and the verdict in favor of Smith, jurisdiction over him already belonged to the Philippines. However, it dodged the issue of the illegal banishment of Smith to the US embassy, saying it was moot. The deed having been done, and so let it go. The appeals court has no authority to order the return of Smith to Philippine authorities, the transfer being an illegal act. But it chose to condone that illegal act. Maybe, the court was thinking that it could not do anything if the US Embassy ignored its order to return Smith to Philippine jurisdiction.

But that's the job of the executive—to enforce an order of the court. Even if the executive is unable to do that, ordering what is legal would have been better than yielding to an illegal act.

With that direction as precedent, the way is now open for litigants to beat the law by presenting it might be court decisions—that is, by doing what a dictator wants to prevent, thus making the decision moot.

The lawyers of Senky can elevate the appellate court's decision to the Supreme Court. He can only hope that the high court will have the courage to rule what is right. The tribunal already has a black mark on its record—during the term of Chief Justice Hilario Davide—when it ruled as legal the illegal takeover of the presidency by Gloria Macapagal Arroyo from Joseph Estrada.

There has come—the Arroyo appeal to Davide case and the Smith case—well before to a list on the Philippine judiciary. Lawyers and law students will always be talking about the cases, and the discussions will not be flattering to our justices.

Let me refresh your memory on the Macapagal-Estrada case: the Constitution provides that the president can be replaced only in case of (1) death; (2) permanent disability; (3) resignation; and (4) impeachment.

Estrada is not dead; he is not disabled; he has not resigned; and the impeachment proceeding against him was not finished. The prosecutors walked out of the Senate. So how come GMA was allowed to replace him?

The Davide Court ruled that his role "resigned" was a "constructive resignation"—meaning he was pressured to have resigned although there was no letter of resignation in existence. Here did the justices seem to—but come know? From the diary of Leo Echegaray, published by Esperdo Angara, and from newspaper reports?

Neither Angara nor his diary nor the newspaper reports must ever been presented as evidence; so they could not have had any bearing on the case. Only the facts in the highest affidavit of the land, was removed from office. Estrada was elected President by the people with several million more votes than his rivals, the biggest win in the history of elections in the Philippines. But he was removed from office on the say-so of only 11 justices of the Supreme Court.

Besides, could have cited the prosecutors for contempt for walking out of the Senate impeachment proceedings, but he did not. And if the prosecutors did not resign, he should have declared the impeachment process a failure, and Estrada would have remained President. But they wanted Estrada out so much the justices invented cross-cutting resignations—the reason for resignation found in GMA.

And look what is happening to us now.

Courage

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

I LOST THE TEST MESSAGES IN THE MIDDLE of last week. My good friend, Harry Roque, had just got a number of death threats via his cellphone.

The text message read: I've spelled out the text abbreviations and added punctuations; otherwise I've retained the original sentence construction. "Data boi and boi, our love don't let hands but it's still our love. Not all the time are you lucky. Your end to near and your hand. Is" another read: "Atty Roque RIP. Kami sa Bagong Bilibid Bilibid Bilibid at sabihin ang pagmamahal ng mga kapatid ng mga nakakulong sa bilibid. Ako kasing magbebenta sa iyo. Ako kasing magbebenta sa iyo. Ako kasing magbebenta sa iyo

The Smith case, once more

YES, WE MUST RESPECT THE TREATIES WE have entered into. Pacta sunt servanda states a fundamental obligation of any civilized nation. Finally, however, I do not understand how our government could do it.

But it must also be admitted that the matter is complicated by the fact that the Smith case is not an ordinary criminal case; it is one which also involves foreign relations. And foreign relations are particularly the domain of the President. Hence there is a need to make the delicate and difficult balance between law and order on the one hand, and foreign relations on the other. What the government and the Court of Appeals did was to attempt to strike a balance but with results that are far from satisfactory.

Let us begin with the complications arising from the treaty itself. A key provision says: "In the event Philippine judicial proceedings are not completed within one year, the United States shall be relieved of any obligations under the preceding paragraph." One government may invoke the provision for the "judicial proceedings" to be found to be the premise that not read with the convenience of limitations causes into the period of appeal (hence the proceedings are not yet over).

The next paragraph in the treaty provision immediately follows, which says: "The one-year period will not include the time necessary to appeal."

What is the consequence of our government's position? Again we must look to the text of the treaty. It says that "the United States shall be relieved of any obligation under this paragraph . . ." And what, pray, is the obligation of which the United States has been relieved? Again we go to the text: to "make such provisional arrest and detention." **Philippine authorities is now for any investigation or judicial proceedings relating to the offense with which the person has been charged."**

In simple terms, since our government has agreed that "judicial proceedings" were not terminated within one year, our government is relieved from its obligation to make such provisional arrest and detention

As elitist as the 'trapo' parties

LETTERS

I AGREED WITH THE EDITORIAL editorial "An observation," (PDI, 12/26/03). The legislature today is no more nor better. It may in fact be more similar than different in many aspects with the existing multisectoral Philippine political parties.

In advocacy of requiring candidates to have a college or university degree in order to run and thus unacceptable in a genuine democracy, it will fall far below the good and the underprivileged that Napoleon purports to serve. That counter-intuitive idea also implies that the only choice voters have is between "the dumb, uneducated celebrities" and "the educated, thinking intellectuals." Theoretically valid in reality. Once we start thinking, uneducated celebrities as there are dumb, "uneducated intellectuals." Seemingly winning are educated and thinking intellectuals who are not dumb and the plight of the poor and the underprivileged.

Richardo Poe Jr. was not educated in the sense that he did not acquire a college degree, but surely he was far more thinking than the acting President. I doubt if call an inquiry seven term down (PJ) being against globalization. And who will forget his intellectual political thesis which at school class was people's no. 1 problem is "alienation" (almost, simplistic, impressive)? While Pro banning discussed social revolution issues during the campaign, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo merely harped on the lack of college education.

Public service is not a question of having a college degree; it is a question of sincerity. You can have all the college, masteral and even doctoral degree in the world, but these won't guarantee sincerity in serving the poor and the underprivileged. A illiterate candidate is better choice over one even if the latter is educated. As for Bataan mayor "Garapata system, pardone (The corruption of the lens is the worst," And the other, a candidate who is both smarter and educated would be better than a candidate who's only either one or merely educated.

We have had enough of "educated" politicians like Erap and now de Venecia, as a low class would-dictators-cum-statesmen, like the one proposed by Imperial, would be more unwelcome. We deserve better and we cannot get better candidates by further limiting our field of choices.

Instead of to the rule of the people and it's all about who gets elected. Everybody of eligible age must be allowed to run, we should not blame the masses for voting uneducated clowns or mal-educated intellectuals. And let's not discriminate against those who failed to have college degrees because of poverty.

How will you tell the people that you care for them when you are planning to junk their right to run for public office? Expected heckler to some and it won't get the support of the masses because of its undemocratic stench.

—DAVID DA ZOIA,
dmzoia@manmedia.yahoo.com

Sabio compared to Yorac, reminded of vow

THE CONSTANT REMINDER WOULD LIKE to remind Presidential Commission on Good Governance Chair Camilo Sabio that he promised to resign if nothing happened to the unliquidated appropriations vs. disbursements survey by the end of 2003. The survey results is disturbing. Sabio's reputation as a low class would-dictators-cum-statesmen, like the one proposed by Imperial, would be more unwelcome. We deserve better and we cannot get better candidates by further limiting our field of choices.

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—DAVID DA ZOIA,
dmzoia@manmedia.yahoo.com

Illegal parking terminal now a 'magnet' for crimes

THIS IS TO SAID A 30-YEAR-OLD CONcern of the Roxas Andrews Gardens Homeowners Association, we believe this affects not only the almost 1,000 residents but also the entire populace of Pasay City.

Our specific concern revolves around the operation and maintenance of a parking terminal for PUJs (public utility jeepneys) and PUBs (public utility buses). The terminal occupies a stretch of public road from the corner of the Roxas Boulevard Service Road and Cuneta Avenue to Buendia Street, Pasay City. We have long expressed these to Brgy. We have requested both the Office of the Mayor and the Transportation Regulated to penalize the city ordinance/resolution governing the legality of the terminal, to no avail.

Now, another unspecified threat. Private Terminal nor Association Allen Bautista has requested to use letters where are called their attention to the problems in the area—like the killings, mugging and worsening traffic situation which all have caused anxiety and fear on the hearts of our residents. For this, we can't help but be immensely disappointed with the kind of public service and response we are getting from our local officials.

There used to be a Traffic Aide(s) and Management Office (aide-that no longer exists) is needed to give way to a beautification project. We are keen enough not to believe that the existence of parking boy-conductors and the attendants from the operators of the illegal parking terminal are not accountable to the Office of the City Treasurer, Jurisdiction matters.

Because of the incident, the beautification of the side streets—new brick-paved sidewalks, colorful streetlights and single parking slots stretching from the sidewalk of Vito Cruz Street to the Pasay-Barbosa boundary—has become "an exercise in futility," so to speak.

If our suspicion is correct, then the officials of Pasay City who are involved must be held accountable. We hope the acting mayor of Pasay City will be bolder in sustaining these illegal activities and hold—as well from the list of city officials who were suspended earlier for engaging in illegal transactions.

—PETE L. BAGAN,
president, Roxas Boulevard Gardens Homeowners' Association, Pasay City,
pete_bagan@yahoo.com

Smells like pork barrel

I AGREE WITH JUAN MIGUEL LUCES VIEN of the government's School Feeding Program. (PDI, 12/26/03) The Department of Education needs more than rice to keep Grade 1-2 pupils in school. Students drop out of school not only because they don't have rice to eat or because they are malnourished.

Our public schools need instruction here, more books, more classrooms. To send their children to school, parents need jobs, not charity. A lot of the children in our classrooms are the pupils will repeat in school every day, or they don't will be for property. Indeed, what a child go to school to get his nutritional rice, even if he is sick? Or what if a child's rice ration is sold to buy a textbook or school, who owns the other result of the family or is interested into a "loan"?

The Depdic has been right all along—to budget should allow for the hiring of more teachers and building of more classrooms.

The government's School Feeding Program smells like pork barrel.

—NANCY ANGELI BALMACEDA,
13 Pure, Obando, Bulacan

An authentic hero

UNDOUBTEDLY, JUDGE BENJAMIN POZON is a rare gem that shines brilliantly in government. What matters most to him is our national interest and sovereignty. He stood his ground unmindful of the pressure and consequences he faced because of his decision. To his relatives, we only to Pozon a wise Filipino and a conscientious judge, but as an authentic hero, on a far higher pedestal than any show-biz, sports, fashion or beauty celebrity does'ers.

His independence of mind and bold stance make Filipinos proud and raise our dignity as a nation. Despite going against the demand of the UN government which had the support of the Department of Foreign Affairs and the Department of Justice, whose highest mentality knows no bounds. And as convicted Lance Cpl. Daniel Smith is now back in US custody. What shame and disgrace!

Pigin on, Judge Pozon for justice and national identity.

—DAVID S. PELAYO,
Adlaw, Silang, Cavite

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'Jueteng' operators dangle funds to pols

LUCENA CITY—WITH ELECTIONS ONLY A FEW MONTHS AWAY, a group of gambling "bookies" allegedly under the protection of a Cabinet official, has been luring local government executives in Quezon province to call for a stop of the government-run small town lottery to pave the way for the immediate return of "jueteng," an illegal numbers game.

One of the mayors from the Bicolon Peninsula told the Inquirer that the group had invited most of the mayors to a meeting in a classy restaurant on the outskirts of this city.

"But I will not attend [the meeting] because I'm not interested. Why would we return to jueteng? Only evils would as an election issue against us by our political opponents!" The STL is enough as it is. Both ran nothing to worry, but we would just collect the payola just like the old days. The offer was really very tempting, to the highest," a ranking southern Tagalog provincial official told the Inquirer.

Election campaigns. But nowadays, jueteng money would be a welcome political issue which can ruin any political career," said the informant.

Efforts to reach the group, the informant said, a "new player" would be the principal operator.

Board member Isaias Ilanan II said he also got wind of the report about the planned revival of jueteng as soon as the contract of Pinnacle Corp., the STL franchise holder for Quezon, expires next month.

Ilanan said he would denounce the plan in a privilege speech before the provincial board in its next regular session.

"We have long rejected the operation of the illegal numbers game. Definitely, we will not allow its revival. We will order the police to immediately stop any attempt to resurrect jueteng," Ilanan said.

Provincial police chief Senior Supt. Victorio Caragan Jr. said he had not received any report yet on the planned revival of jueteng.

"But whatever it is, we will not allow jueteng to resume operation. First, it is illegal. Second, there's already a legal number game which now enjoys popular support, the government-run STL," Caragan said.

He said he would instruct local police chiefs to go after jueteng operators and other people involved once the illegal game resumed operation.

"There's still a standing one-strike policy. Every police chief should bear that in mind," Caragan said.

The provincial board allowed Pinnacle Corp. to operate the STL through Resolution No. 2005-439-dated Dec. 5, 2005. —Jeffle T. Mallari Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon

A "JUETENG" collector in Bulacan, Marina Vizcaya, takes time to review the previous draw's winning number combinations

Police consult farmers, tricycle drivers, not pols, about security

BACOLOD CITY—MARKING FROM THE killing of a 2005 peace crusader forged by Bishop-elect Conrado Tadeus Antonio Dinualdo Diaz, Luis Bersamin Jr. and politicians in Abra, police have decided to outline peace agreements instead with farmers, tricycle drivers and ordinary folk of the province.

Cordillera police spokesperson Senior Supt. Joseph Adiel said Task Force Abra wanted to address Abra's "culture of violence" by consulting ordinary citizens, instead of their political leaders, about their province's security issues.

The feedback they would draw from a pilot consultation in Bangued, Abra on Friday would help improve the government's strategy in resolving violence in the province, Adiel said.

He said police had given themselves until March to reinforce security measures in Abra using suggestions offered by village residents.

The Department of the Interior and Local Government had placed the province under tactical control, a move that was made necessary after local politicians had taken up positions and soldiers for private security duties.

The National Police Commission also removed the administrative powers Valera and Abra mayors had over the police officers assigned there.

Adiel said the police needed witnesses to testify against politicians involved in assassinations. "We have never been able to get communities close to cooperate. People there always assume that the police are there as bodyguards of their politicians and no cases are being resolved because these politicians are very influential," he said.

He said some of the Abra murder cases had been solved. "Even the high-profile cases have co-accusers, who were the mastermind of a hitman who was caught in the crossfire," he said.

He said the police were frustrated that neither the national security takeover nor the peace agreement had worked.

The covenant was imposed last year by Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno, Bersamin, Diaz and Abra Governor Vicente Valera.

Witness was also a member of the fact-finding mission that came to Bangued during Abra under special law enforcement status.

"Task Force Abra is inviting experts to join the consultations. We have the head of the Davanian Screening unit. We also have prosecutors. We will lay down our cards and explain to ordinary Abra residents how police investigate rapes, how these cases are prosecuted, and why we need their help," Adiel said.

"We need to narrate the average Abra resident that we can change their lives but we need to find out from them how we can make that change. We can no longer impose policies on them."

"There are very good developments [in the Bersamin murder case]. We want to also share that with them," he added.

The Traffic Management Group charged Valera this week with illegal possession of firearms after his unmarked vehicle yielded seven unlicensed guns.

But the governor is yet to be indicted for Bersamin's murder after being identified by a suspect as the mastermind. Vincent Cabreza, Inquirer Northern Luzon

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Driver of Capiz board member questioned on exec's murder

By Felipe V. Calleo
Inquirer Visayas

ROXAS CITY—POLICE ON FRIDAY BEGGED IT in for questioning a driver of provincial board member Ronald Fuentespina in connection with the Dec. 30 killing of Tapaz Vice Mayor Victor Gardose and two others.

Noel Fuentespina, 28, of Barangay Malitbog in Tapaz, was arrested by operatives of a narcom on another case but police said they also wanted to ask the driver about the killing of Gardose.

Tapaz police chief Insp. Jose Aton said Fuentespina and Fernando were both at the village hall of Barangay Tiñi when Gardose and his two companions were ambushed and killed several meters away.

Fernando reportedly wanted to run for mayor of Tapaz in the May election—a post that is also being eyed by the slain vice mayor.

Aton said Fuentespina was arrested in connection with charges of murder and frustrated murder filed in the town of Cuartunan, Iloilo. But he admitted that the police wanted to question him on the Gardose case.

Fernando was invited to the coronation of a beauty queen in the Barangay Roxas that Gardose was to attend, when the vice mayor was gunned down by two hooded wearing men as he alighted from his jeep at around 7 p.m. of Dec. 30, 2006.

Also killed were Leonardo Ginares Jr., chair of Barangay Cartidad, and Gardose's bodyguard, Antheny Esquillo.

Fernando could have been the lone political opponent of Gardose in the May election after his cousin, three-term Mayor Bienvenido Fernando Jr., endorsed him as his successor.

Fuentespina was arrested at Fernando's house as he and the board member were about to leave for Roxas City to attend the provincial board's first regular session for 2007.

Policemen in plainclothes took the driver and brought him to the Tapaz police station.

Fernando said he did not know his driver had pending cases. He questioned the arrest of Fuentespina because his driver was always with him anywhere he went.

Fernando said he would provide a lawyer for Fuentespina, the board member's driver of two years.

Last week, it was the policeman security detail of Mayor Fernando, identified as PO3 Danilo Estilloza, who was held for police questioning on the Gardose killing.

Task Force Gardose considers Estilloza a suspect in the killing of Gardose, Ginares and Esquillo.

Both Estilloza and Fuentespina are in the custody of the provincial police.

A total of P800,000 has been offered as reward to whoever could give information leading to the arrest of the killers of the vice mayor and his companions.

The Fernando cousins have denied involvement in the attack.

Mayor Fernando has asked the National Bureau of Investigation to help speed up the investigation, saying the incident had brought great confusion in Tapaz.

Board member Fernando also expressed dismay over criticisms against their family. On Friday, he delivered a privilege speech decrying any part in the ambush.

"Everybody was in a frenzy condemning me—throwing to high heavens that I be delivered to the devil instead, opening the floodgates of retribution to me and my family. It is sad how people can be so cruel, but worse is to condemn an innocent man for the sins of others," he said in his speech.

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

In our continuing effort to provide all our subscribers with the best possible wireless service, we would like to encourage all SMART prepaid subscribers to totally use-up the FREE text messages and FREE airtime allocated to them with each load.

As authorized by the NTC, all FREE text messages will now have an expiration date effective January 15, 2007. The said expiration date will coincide with the expiration of the airtime balance.

All SMART retailers are likewise informed that the 300 SMS incentive credited to them will now expire within 40 days, effective January 15, 2007.

SMART COMMUNICATIONS, INC.

Coal-fired plant in Misamis starts operations

By Grace Alfonso
Inquirer Mindanao

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY—THE 100-MEGAWATT (MW) coal-fired power plant in Misamis Oriental formally operations today with President Macapagal-Arroyo leading the inauguration rites.

The $100-million power plant, built by Sultan Energy Phil. (SEPC), sits on a 35.42-hectare property inside the Phividec Industrial Estate in Villanueva town.

Ms. Arroyo will be accompanied by Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla and German ambassador Axel Weybrauge.

SEPC officials said the plant would provide 11 percent of Mindanao's total power demand, estimated at more than 1,000 MW.

"The project brings an optimistic outlook for the economy of 2007 as it answers the call of the President to use alternative fuel and responds to the government's campaign for investments in effective power energy," said Jose Sabiniño, SEPC Corporate Affairs officer, said.

But militant groups maintained that the operation of the plant, which will be fed by Indonesian coal, was unnecessary and would harm the environment.

Ben Cruz Ellona, spokesperson of the local environmental group Task Force Macajalar, said data from the Department of Energy shows that Mindanao would have enough electricity until 2012 even if no new generation plants was built.

Ellona said the BOI had estimated that Mindanao's combined power plant last year was producing an excess of more than 350 MW.

The operation of the power plant would further threaten the environment even if SEPC used state-of-the-art antipollution devices, he added.

Antipollution devices

He said SEPC has been boasting about its antipollution devices but was silent on the issue of giant boilers and stacks.

"Toxic chemicals like mercury, chromium and lead cannot be completely removed by antipollution devices. Basically these flue gas desulphurization and bag filters or electrostatic precipitators are just good at preventing acid rain-causing gases like sulfur oxides and nitrogen oxides, but they fly ash will still end up in the environment," Ellona said.

Salcedo said SEPC had adopted many measures to ensure the safety of the environment and health of the people living near the plant.

Measures

He said ash by-product disposal facilities, coal handling plant, water treatment facilities, oil storage facility, fire fighting station, transmission line and raw water intake and pipeline had been installed so that the plant's operations would have little impact on the environment.

Salcedo said the operation would also be closely monitored by the Environmental Management Bureau.

SEPC, he said, had put up P30 million in funds for environmental preservation projects and social development programs.

Sultan Energy group, which has been promoting the coal-level facility since 2003, would monitor plant operations for adherence to environmentalism.

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo's daughter Luli Arroyo is the computerized monitoring of emissions from the coal-fired power plant inside the control room during a visit last December. At her left is Andrew Rubio, president of the power firm SEPC. Photo by Inquirer Mindanao

Church urges Guimaras folk to reject oil spill deal

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
Inquirer Visayas

ILOILO CITY—THE ARCHDIOCESE OF Jaro has called on Guimaras residents affected by the oil spill to reject a settlement agreement that waives their right to damage claims in the future.

In a pastoral statement on Thursday, Msgr. Hidilito Oro, director of the Archdiocesan Social Action Center, also called on Petron Corp. and insurance firms to pay "just compensation" to the residents.

Oro said the residents were being paid a "pittance for the surrender of their rights" to seek "just compensation" from Petron and the insurance firms.

The archdiocese has tapped the assistance of the Iloilo and Negros Law Center to help the people seek higher compensation.

The International Oil Pollution Compensation (IOPC) Fund has started paying residents affected by the oil spill an interim compensation ranging from P15,000 to P25,000. The IOPC is a London-based intergovernmental agency that indemnifies losses resulting from oil spills.

Around 13,000 residents have filed claims for economic losses totaling from the oil spill after the MT Solar 1 sank in stormy seas off Guimaras on Aug. 11, 2006.

The vessel, which was transporting more than 2.1 million liters of bunker fuel oil by Petron from Bataan to Dumbarton, spilled over 300,000 liters of its fuel load, causing coastal areas with oil sludge.

Nearly half of the claimants from the five municipalities of Guimaras have already received payments. The IOPC aims to complete the payment every month.

In an earlier statement, IOPC deputy director Jose Nicholo said the compensation was derived from claims of losses and the average income of claimants before the oil spill.

Retired Judge David Alberto A. said the one-page Agreement signed by the claimants upon receipt of checks from the IOPC was "detrimental" to them.

He cited the provision that states that claimants "irrevocably" waive their rights for further court claims from the receipt of Solar 1 related to oil spill damage.

Alberto said this would bar the residents from seeking future claims in case of another oil spill from the vessel.

"The Solar 1 is still there and there is a possibility, even if remote, that oil spills could happen because the hulls of 2.1 million liters of bunker fuel is still inside it," Alberto said in the press conference.

Many of the affected fishermen could have been unaware of the implications of the agreement in their desire to receive the compensations, said Alberto.

He said communities affected by the massive Estero Valdez oil spill in Alaska in 1989 were still receiving payments in the years and had rejected several deals there.

But Rizalde Hora II, Guimaras provincial legal officer who reviewed the signed agreements, refuted Alberto.

"They (residents) can still claim for damages if another oil spill from Solar 1 happens," said Hora.

At least 234 residents of the island-village of Guimaras in Nueva Valencia town have signed a statement refusing to approve the final settlement agreement.

Alberto said he would assist the residents who find not signed the agreement and had not received any compensation to ask for higher compensation from the IOPC.

But he said it would be difficult for those who had already been paid and had signed the agreement because they would require a nullification of the document.

Mr. Atty. Magdoza would take a long time and would be very expensive income it would be against the IOPC and Petron.

Oro said the archdiocese was backing the residents' demand for compensation and the immediate removal of the wreck from the waters of Guimaras.

The archdiocese will also call for a boycott of Petron products until the affected areas are completely cleaned up and the residents compensated.

He said churches in the 92 parishes under the archdiocese would bring up residents' suffering to the Government.

Petron spokesperson Carlos Tan said the move would be "unproductive." He earlier said it would not hasten the clean-up or the payment for damages.

A FISHERMAN in Guimaras stand in Barangay Cabalagnan, Nueva Valencia, Guimaras, one of the areas badly hit by coal spill last year, prepares for going back to sea. Around 200 banks of mussel bed didn't were within the island last December

ROUNDUP

Securing Central Mindanao

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—Police in Central Mindanao are stepping up security measures to prevent political killings in the region. The move comes a day after gunmen killed the mayor of Datu Saudi Ampatuan in Maguindanao province. Datu Saudi Ampatuan Mayor Bashad Lutfilla and Ginoman ambassador Axel Weybrauge.

New Bicol police chief

LEGAZPI CITY—Chief Supt. Ricardo Layada has assumed the post of director of the Philippine National Police in Bicol, succeeding Chief Supt. Hermilando Mallari, who will be retiring this month after 30 years of service. PNP Director General Oscar C. Calderon is the guest speaker during the turnover ceremony. Padilla and Calderon's schedule of activities for as well as appointments. Collaboration Technical Institute the Zabala Company of the Bukidnon Philippine Constabulary based in Camarines Sur. The new PNP Bicol director succeeded his predecessor that his new position Bicolano community.

Inquirer Southern Luzon

Suspected robber slain

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY, Laguna—A suspected bank robber was killed by police in Barangay Bagumbayan, Sta. Rosa City, on Dec. 20, Tuesday, police chief Supt. Francisco Rodriguez said. Police identified Rodriguez as Jose Dela Cruz, 38, a native of Bicol. Police said he was killed while his companion escaped. Rodriguez said Dela Cruz, a member of the robbery gang, was killed after he refused to obey police officers and attempted to run. He said police searched the house of Dela Cruz and found several firearms and explosives. Rodriguez said the police are looking for the companion of Dela Cruz.

Inquirer Southern Luzon

2 killed in front of chapel

DAVAO CITY—Two persons were killed in front of a chapel in the province of Davao Oriental on Tuesday, police said. The victims were identified as Jose Dela Cruz, 38, and Manuel Rivera, 40, both residents of Barangay Poblacion, Mati City. Police said the victims were walking in front of the chapel when they were attacked by two unidentified gunmen. The gunmen fled after the shooting. Police said they are looking for the gunmen.

Inquirer Southern Luzon

Guard kills suspected robber

TARAVAO CITY—A security guard shot and killed a suspected robber in Barangay Poblacion, Mati City, on Dec. 20, Tuesday, police said. The victim was identified as Jose Dela Cruz, 38, a native of Bicol. Police said the victim was walking in front of the chapel when he was attacked by two unidentified gunmen. The gunmen fled after the shooting. Police said they are looking for the gunmen.

Inquirer Southern Luzon

P1M lost in holdup

DAGUPAN CITY—A security guard was killed and another wounded in a holdup in Barangay Poblacion, Mati City, on Dec. 20, Tuesday, police said. The victim was identified as Jose Dela Cruz, 38, a native of Bicol. Police said the victim was walking in front of the chapel when he was attacked by two unidentified gunmen. The gunmen fled after the shooting. Police said they are looking for the gunmen.

Inquirer Southern Luzon

RP loss, US gain …

and well paid, and we be boarded eighteen to America.

To make more money. To become … a nurse.

It hasn't worked out quite as he expected. Life in New York has proved exhausting and full of unforeseen pitfalls. And back home, many of his countrymen still find his choice difficult to accept, because the paradise of Elmer Jacinto's career plans doubles about their future.

Jacinto's emigration perfectly the country's fundamental question today," a newspaper columnist opined. "Namely, why should anyone want to stay in?"

Basilan roots

On the Philippine island of Basilan, electricity is a sometimes event. Telephone lines depend only at dead-ends. Both are blamed on the Abu Sayyaf, a Muslim fundamentalist group with no outward connection to violence.

So when Jacinto graduated high school three, eight years ago, he and his father set aside talk of dreams to examine reality.

"There is money in nursing," the older man counseled.

Jacinto graduated first in his nursing class, and found work at the local hospital before leaving for a better paying job in the city. In hindsight, the move seemed fated. Not long after, the airport bombs stormed the hospital, taking nurses in hostage. One of Jacinto's former coworkers was killed during a shootout with soldiers.

But in Manila, Jacinto packed ahead. He enrolled in medical school, rose to the top of his class, then joined 1,500 other aspiring doctors to take the arduous medical exam.

When the scores were released, Jacinto was the No. 1 passing doctor in the nation.

Jacinto, though, was already making other plans. In a world where a Filipino nurse earns $1,000 a month and both nurse leaders like some person, he would play the break—earning while the good of becoming a neurologist to work as a nurse in America for far greater pay.

Not surprising

His choice should not have been a surprise. Nearly a million Filipinos take jobs abroad each year. But none the Philippines sees bleeding doctors.

"Before, our best branched to as a brain drain. But I think it now as a brain hemorrhage," says Dr. Nieves Ordoñez Ong, a former secretary of health.

Two estimates that in the last five years, 9,000 Filipino doctors—out of about 96,000—have relocated as nurses, and 5,000 have gone abroad. Some local hospitals have five, if not, doctors and nurses, and now suffers.

Money is a major factor. A nurse in the Philippines makes $250-$350 a month. Doctors make $300-$800. But the average registered nurse in America earns $3,000 a month.

The decision, though, remains intensely personal, and at no to see. It had generated Undead and more, critics say, would Jacinto set out to explain himself to a nation of 84 million people.

3-way process

In early 2004, Jacinto quietly began telling others of his plans.

"Even before he announced his decision, we already felt it was coming," says Dr. Reynaldo Chiaw, dean of medicine at Ateneo College. "It was I who brought it up because I could see his embarrassed smile."

Jacinto acknowledges wanting to draw attention to the choke economic status of health care workers or to stem policymakers had too long ignored.

"My decision is a two-way process," he recalls thinking. "It's not only you as a citizen. It's also about the government that should also give you work, or something for yourself, to be able to live a dignified life."

He declines to attack a government of resources.

Jacinto's story "was like a clap in the face," Tan says. "Even well-to-do people that I would meet, it was like: They what has happened to our country?"

"Duplicable ambition," one newspaper proclaimed.

Some, Jacinto's private doctors even public property.

"We invested huge sums [on, but only upped to you to stay," Sen. Ingud ino Pimentel Jr. said in a speech to Jacinto and nearly 900 other new doctors.

Doctor's covenant

A fellow doctor, Willie Ong, got to thinking. He wrote a "doctor's covenant" that outlined 1,000 physicians to sign it, pledging to remain in the country for three years.

But another 1,000 turned him down.

In last year, Ong started the Movement of Idealistic and Socialistic Doctors (MISD), campaigning at medical schools to convince doctors in may-ross lives that they become doctors.

Filipino lawmakers, too, found their way to the issue. They've proposed requiring all new nurses to to serve in the Philippines by two to three years before being allowed to work overseas.

The question now is whether the lawmakers will speed up the exodus.

When the US Senate approved an immigration overhaul last summer, it included a measure allowing an unlimited number of foreign nurses to enter the country. If the change becomes law, "the Philippines will suffer more serious will bleed to death," Tarcone.

By the time 23 lawmakers had taken up the issue, though, Jacinto had already arrived.

Exciting but alive

On a Friday night in November 2005, a China Airlines jet touched down at New York's John F. Kennedy International airport. Tarmac newly minted nurses walked down the gangway, and a recruiter stepped forward to meet them.

Jacinto and seven others were met to Jamaica Gardens, a nursing home in Smithtown, New York, about 90 kilometers from Manhattan.

For Jacinto, the new world was exciting, but alien.

The air was sharp, the ground was brick. He and his roommates were the only people who seemed to walk anywhere in a city where most people appeared by car.

But the jarring adjustment was minor compared with problems that over time became increasingly troubling, he and other nurses allege. Their account is strongly disputed by the nursing home operators and industry recruitment agency.

The new employers, which had promised two months free housing, assigned eight nurses to a small, dingy home—a right fit with three bedrooms and a single bathroom that did not discover until Jacinto and another nurse slept on pallets stacked in the living room.

The house—a one-story bungalow large enough for a small family—still houses newly arrived nurses and their families.

But serves driveway

On a recent visit to a reporter, the bungalow housed eight people, including three children, who two nurses lacks to sell out. The kitchen sink was clogged shut and was drinking out the window. Lights in the kitchen did not work, it ran strained across the driveway.

After a few weeks of doing clerical work, Jacinto and the other nurses say they were assigned to nursing duties but paid less than promised. Some say their wages were shortchanged in other ways, or being paid for eight work or yet-guaranteed insurance.

By spring, they'd had enough. They employer, who normally The nurses were always treated badly, were many walked out without notice, endangering patients requiring constant care.

What's clear is that on April 7, Jacinto and 10 others quit. In all, 26 nurses left, including five rotated accidents.

Six years five months had passed since Jacinto, briefly the most famous doctor in the Philippines, had arrived in the United States. Now he was anonymous—and out of a job.

Back on front page

Last fall, Jacinto's face resurfaced on front pages at home, the central character in a revised morality tale about a top-act by current superintendent.

Jacinto and the other nurses are out of work and running out of money. Filipino newspaper readers were told. Many, they are living in disciplined, working houses, at the end of dark city alleys, preceding to the stories.

"They have found out for themselves that the licensed would they had relied upon were faced with large doses of bitter circumstances about they disembarked on the shores of the promised land," Jacinto said in a speech before the Philippine Senate.

But Jacinto, himself, is moving from the discussion, grown weary of explaining himself.

On a recent afternoon, he leads the way through New York's Flushing neighborhood to a table at the Sri Deh Chinese bakery, where one evening serves bubble tea and another advertises international money transfers.

A place for himself

"I feel I belong here," he says. "Look, Jeanne. Lots of Asians."

It took just weeks for the nurses to find work, thanks to an unfamiliar health care labor market. He and three others have settled into a quiet, but spacious walk-up apartment. Once a month, he walks to the bakery and wires $500 to his parents back in Basilan.

The past year has been a trying, his habit of reminding a nurse rather than trying to become a doctor in the United States.

JACINTO at work at the St. Vincent's Midtown Hospital in New York.

Still, Jacinto says he is finding a place for himself—and a sense of peace.

Back home, the expectation is "that you should become the model Filipino, doing it for your country. I want something for myself," Jacinto says. "I want to move on."

He knows that some in his homeland will judge him.

Well, he says, let them talk. AP

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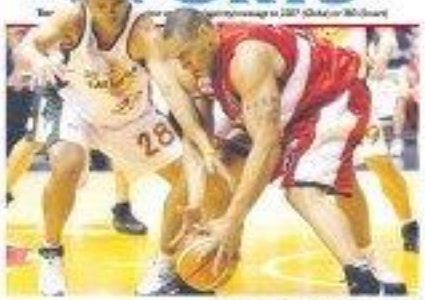


COCA-COLA'S Ali Peek (right) battles Sta. Lucia's Norman Gonzalez for ball possession.

Express stay alive; Realtors triumph

By Musong R. Castillo

Score Notebook for Alaska (Aduana)
4:30 p.m.—Blatche 18, Ildefo
1:30p.m.—Ad-D vs Coca-Cola

ABI21 GOT ITS RUNNING game going late in the third quarter and the Express nipped the Alaska Aces, 112-106, last night to remain in contention for the last quarterfinal berth of the Talk 'N Text PBA Philippine Cup at the Araneta Coliseum.

The Express trailed by as many as 11 points in the first half then was toppled over the Aces to stay on track to a possible playoff clash with the Sta. Lucia Realtors.

The Realtors earlier snapped out of a four-game losing streak with a masterful 122-75 victory over Coca-Cola that eliminated the Tigers.

Sta. Lucia could have gained the quarterfinal berth outright with an Alaska win over ABI21 in the second game.

But Egay Billones, a defensive guard who came into the game averaging less than 4 points per outing, erupted for all of his 16 points in the final two periods to energize the Express and keep them alive.

Gary David also turned in 10 markers as ABI21 showed back from several double-digit deficits to move up to 2-0 in the wild-card and go into the final day of this phase on Wednesday with the chance to sweep.

"It was not planned. It was a spur-of-the-moment thing," ABI21 coach Bo Perasol said, referring to Billones. "I don't know where he got his confidence. But I have to give it to him for stepping up and playing the way he did."

Billones hit 3-of-4 three-pointers in a surreal third quarter lightshock to put the Express within striking distance.

An 11-4 run at the halfway point of the fourth turned a 96-87 deficit to a 100-98 lead, with Billones highlighting the spurt by finishing consecutive backdoor plays with jumpers off the glass.

Kelly Williams, with a bad back and all, paced the Realtors with 22 points and nine rebounds, and Kenneth Duremdes backed him up with 19, including 14 in the third period when the Realtors would build the fight out of the game.

At 11-9 overall and 2-1 for the wildcard, Sta. Lucia could still be dragged into a playoff for the national No. 8 berth in the quarterfinals assuming that the Express win against Coca-Cola on Wednesday.

ABI21 would then be seeding of the wild card duration of a sweep, which will exhibit the team was playoff.

"This game is more important to me in the sense that we got back on track," Sta. Lucia coach Alfrancis Chua said.

The scores

PHR Express

EGB. AGUILAR, GD—Williams 29, Quinnahan 10, Ubandoza 12, Cahill 11, Gabriel 11, Castro 0, Christian 10, Gonzales 16, Bingham 7, Calimpong 7, Asuncion 4, Sain 0.

Alaska-Milk Aces—Arroyo 12, Blatche 18, Cuevas 13, Pascua 7, Pinat 7, Alfonso 5, Yap 4, Salamanca 2, Cortez 0, Cuevas 0, Sumerauz

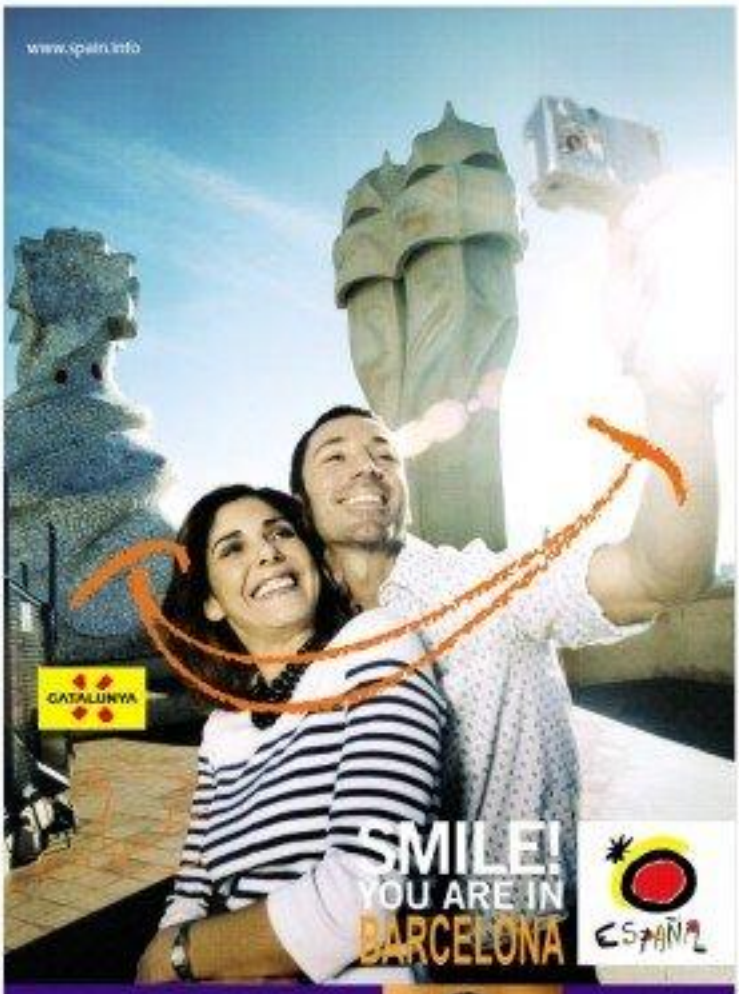
Quarters: 29-15, 48-36, 81-60, 121-75.

Express Lineup

ABI21: 103—David 22, De Ocampo 11, Villanueva 20, Adamos 14, Gonzales 12, Arboleda 10, Soria 5, Santos 4, Andaya 2, Bulaong 0, Fernandez 0, Bernardo 0.

ALASKA 106—Campos 10, Santos 10, Miller 10, Dela Cruz 12, Lucas 10, Flores 9, Hugnatan 9, Simpson 4, Rojo 4, Alano 3, Jones 3, Dawson 2.

Quarters: 19-25, 51-50, 84-68, 112-106.



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5 kids trapped in burning house killed

By DJ Yap

FIVE SIBLINGS—FIVE AGES RANGING from 3 to 10—were killed when they were trapped inside their burning house in a depressed area in Malinta, Valenzuela City before dawn yesterday.

Killed were Blard Ishida, 10, and her siblings Rita, 8; Ishmeq T. Mes-Ang, 7; and Harold A., 5, based on initial reports.

The eldest of the brood, 12-year-old Harold, survived the incident but sustained burns in his arms. He was taken to the Valenzuela General Hospital (GH) for treatment.

The three-hour fire destroyed an estimated P2 million worth of property and displaced some 180 families, according to a report by arson investigator PO3 Fidelito Milano.

Investigators theorized that the blaze began in the victims' two-story home on Camelia Street. Their parents, Harold and Marlene, had left the children very early in the morning to go to the market.

At 2:10 a.m., a fire started in the kitchen, probably caused by a lit candle their parents use in the area at the time. It then spread to the rest of the house which was made of light materials, Milano said.

The victims were trapped in the burning house and neighbors were unable to get them out because the door had been padlocked to keep out burglars, investigators added.

Harold, however, managed to jump out from a window on the second floor, Milano said.

The fire reached the fifth alarm and was put out at 5:26 a.m. but not before it had spread to 89 other houses in the area, officials said.

ACCOMPANIED by his dog, Jun Paul Mupas, 11, looks for anything worth salvaging from the site where his home used to stand. A fire hit a depressed area in Malinta, Valenzuela City yesterday, killing five children. MARIANNE BERMUDEZ

Cops arrest suspect in mall robbery

By Nancy C. Carvajal

AN OFFICIAL OF THE QUEZON CITY POLICE District has confirmed the arrest of a suspect in the robbery of the Ever Gotesco mall on Commonwealth Avenue which took place on Christmas Day.

Supt. Bernabe Balba, QCPD intelligence chief, told the Inquirer in a phone interview the other day that the suspect, Junior Abueg, 31, was arrested after a mall security guard identified him as one of the armed men who held up the department store.

The robbery, also once armed and dressed in Special Weapons and Tactics uniforms, barged into the mall at around 1 a.m. on Dec. 25 and told security guards that they were responding to a threat within the building. They then forged the guards, broke into the treasury office on the second floor and carted away millions of pesos.

Nicknamed "Bebot," Abueg is a member of the Alvin Flores group, a known robbery gang, Balba said.

He added that the suspect was arrested on Dec. 27, the same day his wife complained to the police that several armed men had taken him from their house in Sitio Pantog Ilaw in North Fairview.

Abueg was charged with robbery in band and is now being held at the detention cell of the Criminal Investigation Unit in Camp Carlsgal, Quezon City.

DID YOU KNOW

THE Ninth building of the 63 Centuray on Rada Boulevard, which opened in 1980 as the office and residence of JV Ayala Corporation, was sold to Philippine Finance S. Square. When the Japanese occupied the country, it turned the building into its embassy. After the compound was liberated in 1945, the embassy became a courthouse for war criminals. On July 4, 1946, the Independence Day ceremony of the US Embassy

Conf. Zambales Inquirer Research

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SECURITY BANK
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Raffle offers audience with Pope

By Christian V. Esguerra

TO MARK THE 450TH ANNIVERSARY of the Black Nazarene, 400 ministers' replicas of the image of Jesus Christ from 400th have been sculpted by sculptors from Paete, Laguna.

The sculptures, collectively called the "Nazarenos 400," are now being sold at P50,000 each.

Aside from having exactly 400 miniature versions of the Black Nazarene, however, buying any of the 400 celebrant's items ensures you a shot at an even bigger prize: A chance to meet Pope Benedict XVI at the Vatican.

St. John de Baptist Church in Quiapo, Manila will be holding a raffle for devotees who will purchase any of the 400 images called "Nazarenong."

One of those who has already planned an order for the replica is Vice President Noli de Castro, a devotee.

Each of the miniature images is said to have come from the same actually source by the Nazareno Pueblo Jesus Nazareno.

The raffle will be held before June 3, which marks the end of the Black Nazarene's Jubilee Year.

Proceeds from the sale will go to the different projects of the church which has been the image's home since its transfer from a church of Recollect friars in Intramuros on Jan. 9, 1767.

The transfer, called "traslacion," is what is commemorated every Jan. 9, not the time of the parade patron saint which falls on June 24.

Considered miraculous by devotees, the image of the Black Nazarene arrived in Manila on board a ship in 1607. A fire that hit the ship partly burned the image, giving it its charcoal color.

Msgr. Jimbo Ramirez, Quiapo parish priest, said its color actually helped Filipinos identify themselves with Christ who is also depicted bearing a heavy cross.

"In many devotions, he is the Fil-ipino version of Jesus Christ," he told the Inquirer in an earlier interview.

This year, the "traslacion," which is usually done around the Mount Banahaw of the Black Nazarene (the church's other name), will cover more ground.

A motorcade at 3:30 p.m. today will bring the image to Rizal Park where it will be welcomed by a 14-minute fireworks display. It will be followed by a candlelight ceremony to be led by Archbishop Angel Lagdameo, president of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines.

A series of spiritual activities, including presidential services by bishops and priests, confessions, exercises of the Black Nazarene, and an overnight vigil, will follow at 5 a.m. tomorrow. Manila Archbishop Gaudencio Cardinal Rosales will lead a High Mass.

A procession which will begin at noon will bring the Black Nazarene back to the Quiapo Church.

PROMPT ACTION
In response to a text message sent on Citizen's Call by Inquirer reader Joel about a clogged estero in Manila, Mayor Lito Atienza ordered the clean-up of the estero as tracked near the corner of C.M. Recto and Jose Abad Santos. The photo of the garbage-filled Estero de Magdalena appeared in the INQUIRER's Metro section on Jan. 1. The clean-up operation was conducted last week and was led by Manila Isnar City Development chair Ali Atienza (left, holding bamboo pole) and city engineer Armand Andres.

More jeepney drivers switching to biofuel

By DJ Yap

ON A FUMED FRIDAY AFTERNOON in the heart of Quezon City, a jeepney driver named Ramon pulls into a refueling station, resembling his apologies to a handful of weary passengers.

He tells the attendant: "Ten hundred pesos long unang isaw, hindi lilinis dapat!" Sorry, sir, the antibiotic young man replies, no discount at the moment.

Ramon (only on as the search) pumps a biodiesel blend into the gas tank. Seconds later, he maneuvers the rumbling vehicle back on the street in front the curb lane traffic. Behind him, a jeepney line or a forward hiss and slides into the space he just left.

The seven night well have taken place in any familiar station anywhere else in the country—except for the part about the biodiesel.

Since its launch in December, the Philippine Biodiesel Corp.—the largest and first of its kind in the country, has found a regular patron in Ramon and many of his fellow drivers plying the city's busy streets.

"They [jeepney drivers] complain about half of the customers. The other half are people from the upper and middle class who drive sport's utility vehicles," the manager Cesar Tenjuco said.

"We didn't expect biodiesel to catch on with jeepney drivers so quickly," he told the Inquirer.

What did the industry is estimate of March like 8 era, is a mode of public transport to use consumers with fuels friendly practices, with its operation as the noisy, smoke-belching kings of Metro Manila streets.

But on any given day, one can see jeepneys lining up at the biofuel Center (running the Elliptical Circle, lanes of overnight) just several meters away from a station of oil giant Petron on Commonwealth Avenue.

"I guess they can save the benefits of using biodiesel instead of regular diesel," Tenjuco said.

The Biofuel Center is a venture of Flying V one of the smaller petroleum companies in the country in collaboration with the Philippine National Authority, which owns the property where the facility is located.

It offers various environment-friendly fuels, such as pro-blended coco-methyl ester (CME) or coco-biodiesel, under the brand name Ecogreen. Blended Premium, for diesel engines.

(Diesel is mixed with only one percent of CME in the ready-made products. But motorists may opt for a higher concentration by adding two to three liters of Ecogreen in the diesel, Tenjuco said.)

The center also dispenses fuel ethanol for gasoline-run vehicles.

After two months of operations, the center has begun to attract regular customers, Tenjuco said.

"On the average, we sell between 3,000 and 6,000 liters a day" he said.

"We're happy with the sales, but we're expecting more. Some of our competitors in Batelec who don't offer biodiesel have dropped their prices drastically, which affects us," Tenjuco said.

He said management was now trying to attract more patrons by calling attention to the benefits of alternative fuels like biodiesel, not only to the environment but also to fuel economy.

"With biodiesel, you get more mileage ... If the engine is new, and the driver is careful, the one-percent biodiesel blend can give you up to 15 percent more compared to ordinary diesel," he said.

"And even if the engine is old, and the driver is careless, you still can get 10 percent more mileage with biodiesel," he added.

Ramon all noted to like.

"I notice that my trips to the gasoline station for a refill have become less frequent. Maybe it has something to do with the biodiesel," he said in a reverse-than-with-the business.

Ramon has been driving a jeepney for almost three years now but he began using biodiesel only three weeks ago on the advice of a fellow driver.

"He said I would be able to save on gas if I switched to biodiesel. Natural-ly, I wanted to try it," he said in Filipino.

More than the advantage in terms of mileage, he said he noticed that the quality of exhaust fumes emitted by biodiesel-run vehicles efficiencies.

"In most cases, the smoke looks whiter and lighter, unlike dark fumes that used to be emitted when they were still using regular diesel," Tenjuco said.

Some regular patrons even ask for heavier concentrations of the biodiesel in their fuel, Tenjuco said. "In such cases, they tell me the smoke begins to smell like French fries."

Tenjuco said there should be a greater effort to promote more Filipinos like Ramon to switch to alternative fuels. He said: "There are two very simple but good reasons: It saves oil gas and it's Earth-friendly."

THE BIOFUEL Center in Philcoa, Quezon City (left) has become a favorite fueling station of jeepney drivers looking for more mileage for their money. VINCENT CARUSCOSO

IN OUR QUEZON CITY, Mary Caridad Estrada [...] stop drugs—sure freely. "I'm an occupation is not doing anything about it. Please help us in reporting this to the proper authorities. Thank you.

—CARLO BUENAVENTURA, 39, Quezon City

Attention/SIR/E: the quality of water supply in our barangay—I, Barangay Bunsor in Sta. Cruz, Manila—is so rusted and smelly. I think MWSS should do the collection of payments for November and December because the water is totally useless. Daughter taking toilet. It can't be used for cooking because you will get diarrhea.

—MYLENE DE. Sta. Cruz, Manila

A poor road in our barangay is interconnected an entire network, including a national road, makes me wonder if local officials have been elected from those places. Maybe, they don't live there that's why they don't notice it. I am not in San Dimas but I am concerned about the residents and residents in those places.

—ATTY. MARISSA DUPELLE, 34, Tandang Sora, Quezon City

Barangay can boys along Lagaspi corner Pasay de Roxas in Makati are hissing as women to pay them.

—JOEY REYES, 38, Manili

Cops nab 9 motorbike drag racers

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

THEY WERE NOT FAST ENOUGH.

Nine suspected motorcycle drag racers were arrested early yesterday while they were speeding on a national highway in Taytay, Rizal.

But six others managed to flee and elude police, Rizal police director Supt. Freddie Bueno said.

Responding to complaints from residents, the provincial police went to the area at about 3 a.m. yesterday and chased upon the group on Ortigas Avenue Extension.

Motorcycle drag racing has been a consistent problem in the area. Two months ago, a man was killed after he was run over by one of the racers, Bueno said.

It was not yet clear if only one group has been holding drag races in the area or if those arrested yesterday were members of just one of several groups.

The race usually covers 12 kilometers of the highway. The racers usually race on side streets before picking up speed on the national highway, Bueno said.

Six bikes are allegedly involved in the race. Most of the participants were very expensive motorcycles.

"These racers not only generate noise and disturb people sleeping at night. They also endanger the lives of residents," Bueno told the reporters.

He noted that some of those arrested were "English-speaking" and looked like they came from affluent families.

Police confiscated the suspects' nine motorcycles and also came upon six abandoned motorcycles, leading investigators to believe some of the racers managed to flee.

Those identified those arrested as Jovic Guevarra, 33, Isidro Najera, 29, Lipit Civa, 22; Patrick John Bagnido, 21, Mark Paul Ilan Dacosal, 19; Leo Santos, 26; Christopher Lagos, 28, Arvey Lorenzo, 22 and Jam del Rosario, 25.

Pagnido lives in nearby Gamia while the rest are residents of Taytay.

Police will file charges of reckless driving, abuse and unlawful and disobedience to a person of authority against the suspects.

Traffic jams blamed on fireworks show

By Tarra V. Quismundo

WHAT DO FIREWORKS HAVE TO DO with traffic?

A lot, if you ask the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA). An official yesterday blamed the ongoing World Pyro Olympics in Pasay City for the huge traffic jams in Roxas Boulevard, Taft Avenue and Macapagal.

According to Angelito Sergel de Dios, MMDA Traffic Operations Center chief, motorists' flow on the two major thoroughfares connected to a standstill past noon as motorists stopped or drove slowly to view the fireworks display that lit up the skies over Manila Bay on Friday and Saturday.

"Once the show starts, motorists would stop even if they were on a different because you can really see the fireworks from Roxas Boulevard. If the show starts for an hour, traffic would be on a standstill for an hour," Sergel de Dios told the Inquirer.

Sergel de Dios said the fireworks competition, staged by the Makati-based Lucasville Pyro Technics, and the Philippine Association of the Mall of Asia complex in Pasay City on Friday and Saturday, halted traffic on Roxas Boulevard and Edsa from 6 p.m. until past midnight.

On Saturday, the buildup on Edsa's southbound side—which extended from the Guadalupe overpass all the way to the Quezon City—Jaspe MMDA traffic assistants on the road until 2 a.m.

Adding to the traffic jams were several repairs being undertaken by the MMDA along Edsa. According to the agency, the roadwork, which removed the center island's grass and weeds during the holiday season, would be conducted every weekend until February.

Sergel de Dios said the organizer of the pyrotechnics shows should have coordinated with the MMDA to avoid clashing traffic in the area.

Rosebud Ortiz-Luistro, Roberto Ongpin's spokesperson for the Philippine Olympic Committee, which is organizing the fireworks competition, said the organizers had also coordinated with the MMDA to avoid traffic jams.

"Actually, we informed the MMDA [about the fireworks display] and they said they would be ready for the traffic," Ortiz-Luistro said.

Ortiz-Luistro said the organizers had also coordinated with the Philippine National Police (PNP) to help in traffic management.

Sergel de Dios, meanwhile, came up with a more practical solution: Deploy more traffic enforcers.

"We'll be deploying more traffic enforcers. We'll be deploying more traffic enforcers. We'll be deploying more traffic enforcers.

US to replace arsenal with new nuke weapons

WASHINGTON – THE NAVY ADministration is expected to announce the week a major step forward in the building of the country's first new nuclear warhead in nearly two decades. It will propose continuing elements of competing designs from two weapons laboratories in an approach that some experts argue is risky.

The new weapon would replace the nation's existing arsenal of aging warheads with a new generation in its number, more reliable, safer from accidental detonation and more secure from theft by terrorists.

The announcement, to be made by the interagency Nuclear Weapons Council, avoids making a choice between the two designs for a new weapon, called the Reliable Replacement Warhead. But the council's decision to seek a hybrid design, combining well-tested elements from an older design with new safety and security elements from a more novel approach, could delay the production of the weapon. It also raises the question of whether the limited budget will ultimately be forced to end its moratorium on underground nuclear testing.

On Friday, Bryan Wilkes, a spokesperson for the National Nuclear Security Administration of the Energy Department, said the government would not proceed with the Reliable Replacement Warhead "if it is determined that testing is needed." But other officials in the administration have said that the White House should make no commitment on testing.

While proponents of the new weapon said that it would replace older weapons that could deteriorate over time, and reduce the chances of a detonation if weapons fell into the wrong hands, critics have long argued that this is the wrong moment for Washington to produce a new nuclear warhead of any kind.

At a time when the administration is trying to persuade the world to put restrictions on North Korea and Iran to halt their nuclear programs, those critics argue, any move to improve the American arsenal will be seen as hypocritical. Should the United States decide to conduct a test, officials said, China and Russia would feel free to do the same.

The two teams competing to design the weapon, one at Los Alamos in New Mexico and the other at the Lawrence National Laboratory in California, approached the problem with very different philosophies; nuclear officials and experts said. Livermore drew on a single, robust design that, before the testing moratorium, was detonated in the 1990s under a decades patch of Nevada desert. The weapon, however, never entered the nation's modern stockpile.

The Los Alamos team drew on aspects of many weapons from the stockpile and pulled them together in a novel design that has never undergone testing.

The question now, arms experts said, is whether a mix-and-match approach that combines the two will produce a more hybrid or an unworkable dud. AFP

Violence rages in Somalia over disarmament

A SOMALI refugee girl rises her fingers at the camp where about 160,000 Somali refugees are held, near Dadaab, northeastern Kenya, Jan. 4. AP/PTI

KISMAYU, SOMALIA – HUNdreds of Somalis stormed barefoot into the streets of Mogadishu, Somalia's already unsteady capital, to hurl rocks at Ethiopian troops allied with the government and to protest a disarmament program that Somali leaders ended up scrapping.

Meanwhile, near Kismayu, along Somalia's southern coast, Ethiopian-led forces continued to move more deeply into territory once controlled by the powerful Islamic forces, who ruled much of the country until Ethiopia and its powerful army intervened last month.

According to Abdul Rashid Khalif, a government official in Kismayu, the Ethiopian-led forces blew up several of the islamists' armed pickup trucks, leaving hundreds of fighters unarmed in a remote jungle with their backs to the Indian Ocean. And one way to escape, "I think it will be over very soon," Khalif said.

Still, a pack of gunmen attacked a government patrol near Kismayu's market Saturday night, killing two soldiers and wounding three more, and a homemade mine high-powered rifles echoed across what had been a rather quiet town. It was unclear if anyone was hurt.

Despite much tactical success in recent weeks, Somalia's transitional government appears to be on a path fraught with roadblocks and close encounters. After 16 years of anarchy, the armies of Mogadishu are rarely with military-grade weaponry, much of it in the hands of fifteenth teenagers. Scooping up these guns was one of the first goals of the transitional government, which had struggled for the past two years to assert control and then, nearly overnight, found itself in charge of a newly, violent country.

On Monday, Ali Mohammed Ibrahim, a veterinarian turned transitional prime minister, demanded that all Somalis surrender their weapons in three days. Only a handful of militia either complied, or the prime minister extended the deadline, but still, most Somalis did not give up their guns.

Even former military officers designated with Ibrahim's approach, saying it would take months, not days, to disarm the populace and that the government should negotiate with militiamen and clan elders.

"With the new deadline we're on pins and needles this morning and with Cash threatening house-to-house searches, riots exploded. AFP

As a week passes, slim chance of finding plane

SOLOMANI, INDONESIA – INdonesia beefed up its search for a missing passenger plane Sunday, expanding the operation's area in up to hours the jet nearly a week after its mysterious disappearance.

The scale of the task is immense, with search and rescue teams faced with searching tens of thousands of square miles of land and sea – greater than the size of many small countries.

Three relatives of missing passengers, who were allowed to view the part of the area on a military Boeing reconnaissance plane, admitted that the chances of success were dim.

"Looking at the thick clouds, from the conditions and time, the chances of finding them appear numb-smaller," said Sunny Dimas, who is still waiting for news of three family members on board the Adam Air plane.

The reconnaissance aircraft flew over Banjar and Lanca in South Sulawesi and Poso lake in Central Sulawesi.

The Adam Air plane with 102 passengers and crew vanished off radar screens on Jan. 1 halfway through a flight from Surabaya, on Java island, to Manado on the northeast tip of Sulawesi island.

Ships, planes and some 2,700 [illegible] police, air force, army and search and rescue personnel are now searching for the jet as hunts relatives wait for news of loved ones.

The massive air, sea and land sweep has been badly hampered by bad weather and rugged terrain and uncertainty over where the fleeing aircraft is down.

"It is primarily a question of bad visibility. With the low hanging clouds and bad weather, it is difficult to get a clear view of the ground," said Pt. Kapoteran, who heads the search and rescue office in Makassar, South Sulawesi.

Overland, the difficult terrain and lack of telecommunications present main problems.

Indian Air Marshal Eddy Soparno, who is coordinating the search operations, said three planes based in Makassar were deployed Sunday to comb the central belt of Sulawesi, from the Makassar Strait to the Tolo Bay.

Another task will from an airport in Pula, Central Sulawesi, and Air Force Major Judith of the search and rescue command center in Makassar.

"These areas have been flown over previously but today [Sunday] we will comb them again from the air," he said reporters. AFP

New hi-tech gadgets at US electronics show

LAS VEGAS, NEVADA – PEOPLE are snapping up new technology, altering the fabric of society from the home of the future to the device's user, the organizer of the world's largest consumer electronics show said last week.

Sales of consumer electronics hint manufacturers to remain in the United States is expected to surpass $140 billion in 2007, a six percent rise from 2006, according to the Consumer Electronics Association (CEA).

Last year the industry saw unprecedented growth of 13 per cent, CEA lead analyst Ross Rubin said in a news conference held at Final touches were put on the 40th annual International CES (Consumer Electronics Show), opening Monday in Las Vegas.

"The industry outlook is proud positive that Americans can't do without their latest consumer electronics," said CEA chief executive Gary Shapiro.

The category with the most "buzz" this year was flat-screen televisions, sales of which analysts say prices dropped, according to Shapiro.

Portable navigation devices were a surprising "sleeper category" with sales coming in second only to the televisions, Shapiro said.

"Consumers are adopting new technology faster than ever," he said. "The adoption curve greatly exceeds anything we've seen before." The typical US home has 26 electronic devices, according to CEA statistics.

"Look at where we were in 1970," Shapiro said. "That is an impressive change in the make-up of our homes." Key themes included wireless technology, the CEA established the first four-day show includes a continued trend toward captivating realism in devices ranging from televisions and computers to video game consoles and digital cameras.

Video games are also becoming gateways to other features such as movies and access to online communities. For digital cameras, the "image panel would [now]" is over and the focus is on ease of use, Shapiro said.

Shapiro said higher levels of realism would be delivered by new multi-format DVD technology and that Plasma Brothers would announce a universal disk that could be read by Blu-Ray and competing devices.

Greater wireless, "broadband and mobile telephone connectivity was identified driving theme at the show, along with the boom in home computer networks, Internet technology referred to as VoIP and Bluetooth wireless devices.

"We are not just a hardware company anymore. We are much more about the services and the software," Shapiro said. "VoIP, blogs and vlogs are much more the fabric of our industry." Other show trends were converging technologies and making them portable, such as cellphone of "digital camera" channels of distribution such as websites RedTube, Bebo and MySpace to get video, films or music.

"There are new markets that go against the mainstream model of cable, television ... we are a shift from old models to new," Shapiro said. AFP

EXHIBITOR shows off the 5.8 Ghz video mobile PC at the 2007 International Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas, Jan. 6. The PC runs the Windows Pocket PC operating system, has a 20GB hard drive, 4-inch screen, fold-out keyboard and weighs only 1.4 pounds. AP/PTI

Temperatures in Tibet reach record highs

WITH a silver-lined cloud and shattered boardwalk stands behind them, Pete Nunnelli, left, and Bob Pessarelli sit on the Coney Island beach in the Brooklyn borough of New York, Saturday, Jan. 6. Unusually high temperatures in the low 70s were reported in parts of New York City on Saturday. AP/PTI

BEIJING – TEMPERATURES IN NGGED Tibet have hit record highs in recent days, Chinese state media said Monday, as a concrete sign of the impact of global warming in the Himalayan region.

Nyima's temperature in the Qamdo area of eastern Tibet was 21.8 degrees Celsius (71.6 degrees Fahrenheit), 1.7 degrees higher than the previous record set for the same day in 1966, Xinhua news agency reported.

In Dingqen county also in eastern Tibet, the mercury reached 18.6 degrees Celsius on Thursday, 2.5 degrees higher than the previous record for the same day set in 2004, it said.

Eight other places across the region also recorded record-breaking daily temperatures over the past four days, it added.

Meteorological data in the Himalayan region began to be collected in 1956.

China's Tibet plateau, seen as a barometer of world climate conditions, is experiencing accelerating glacial melt and other ecological damage, the leading People's Daily reported Friday.

The cumulative ice region's glaciers have been melting at an average rate of 131.1 square kilometers (50 square miles) per year over the past 30 years, the paper said, citing a recent geological study.

Researchers who conducted the survey said that even if global warming did not worsen, the area's glaciers would be reduced by nearly a third by 2050 and up to half by 2099, at the current rate.

The survey, conducted by the Remote Sensing Department of the China Aero Geophysical Survey, also found a rapidly rising snow line, shrinking wetlands, and increased desertification compared with 30 years ago, the paper said.

"These problems will worsen as the glacial melt...subside has accelerated in recent years—continuous further reducing the area's water resources, the researchers predicted.

The Tibet plateau, which includes the Chinese portion of the Himalayas, accounts for nearly one-quarter of China's landmass, stretching from Tibet to the adjacent provinces of Qinghai, Sichuan and Yunnan.

A separate national assessment released last week on the impact of climate change and temperatures in China would rise significantly in coming decades, water shortages would worsen, and extreme weather events would intensify. AFP

The WORLD

Editor Lorenzo B. Ocampo

Democrats to fight for end to Iraq war

LCPL Kelly McCormick places a rose on the casket of her son Pvt. Chase McCormick, killed in Iraq on Dec. 27, at his funeral Jan. 6, in Jacksonville, Florida. AFP

WASHINGTON—THE NEW DEMOCRATIC MAjority in the US Congress was poised Sunday for the first major policy confrontation with President George W. Bush, demanding an end to the "intractable war in Iraq."

The call came days before Bush is scheduled to announce his new strategy for victory in the violence-torn country. The plan will reportedly call for bolstering the US military presence in Baghdad by up to 20,000 troops and pouring new Iraq millions of dollars of more aid to create jobs.

But in a weekly Democratic radio address on Saturday, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid made clear the congressional majority saw the solution to getting the troops out of, not exactly their years of war rather than enabling more of their use.

"To control of results, the new Congress will face many challenges this year, but none more important than working with President Bush to find an end to the intractable war in Iraq," Reid said.

In contrast to Bush, the Senate leader said Iraq was not the middle of a "civil war" and argued against any attempt to resolve the problem by increasing the US troop levels.

"More military pledges/deals will set there. It is purely military solution to Iraq, there is only a political solution in Iraq. They are adding more US combat troops in the middle of this civil war undermines our efforts to get the Iraqis to take responsibility."

He said US soldiers and their families had already sacrificed a great deal for Iraq.

"Rather than deploying additional forces to Iraq, we hope the president will make clear to the Iraqi government that the time has come for them to assume more responsibility for their future, and that he will announce he is beginning the phased redeployment of our forces in the meantime to six months," Reid said.

The Senate leader wrapped down of saying Democrats will take their newly-gained power to Congress to block funding for new troop deployments should the administration stay the course.

But he promised Democrats will take upcoming Capitol Hill hearings "to strengthen oversight, demand civil solutions, and keep working to bring this war to a close." AFP

US military deaths in Iraq reach 3,000

BAGHDAD—THE US MILITARY'S losses in Iraq reached 3,000 since the invasion of the country to topple Saddam Hussein in March 2003, according to an AFP count based on Pentagon figures.

The latest announcement comes as US president George W. Bush is set to declare in the next few days his new strategy to curb the daily violence in Iraq which has claimed more than 600 people killed, according to the United Nations.

So, finding the US military announced the death of a soldier in small arms fire near Baghdad a day ago which took it to exactly 3,000.

Under estimate the Pentagon could 2,999 were times had died in Iraq since the US-led invasion as of Jan. 3.

According to the Pentagon of those dead 2,615 were killed in combat actions the non-hostile means, while 503 died due to "non-hostile" causes.

More than 12,200 soldiers were also wounded since the invasion.

Of the 3,000 dead, only 139 died during the initial invasion between March 19 and April 30, 2003.

In November 2006, a total of 111 soldiers were killed, making it the deadliest month since November 2004.

Also in November, the number of American deaths exceeded the number of 2,973 people killed on Sept. 11, 2001 attacks in New York.

According to the Pentagon, around 44 percent of US casualties in Iraq have come from roadside bombs or improvised explosive devices (IEDs) or the military calls them.

There hostile range in complexity from a simple roadside bomb detonated by a trip wire to sophisticated charges that can punch the toughest the military armor.

Small arms fire, including that from the threshold snipers that have increasingly made an appearance in the past year, accounts for just under 20 percent of the US casualties.

About a fifth of the US deaths in Iraq, 588 people, had nothing to do with combat at all, with 55 percent dying in accidents, particularly from driving helicopters. Another 83 servicemen took their own lives.

In Vietnam between 1961 and 1975 the US military lost nearly 60,000 servicemen in the former war between 1950 and 1953 it lost 54,000 people, or in the second world war more than 400,000 were killed between 1941 and 1945. AFP

PARADE OF THE GRISLY
Dining guests perform during the Monsters Parade, Jan. 6, in Philadelphia. AP

US insists Castro is near death

WASHINGTON—THE US INTELLIGENCE community at all believes Cuban leader Fidel Castro is terminally ill and his "months, not years" to live, a spokesperson said Saturday.

Though a Spanish doctor visited Castro last month and denied he had cancer, Bush administration spokesperson for the Office of the National Intelligence, said "The bottom line is a terminally ill."

"He believes that he has months, not years," Hennessy said, adding that "nothing has changed in the director's assessment" since the doctor's comments on Castro late last month.

The Director of National Intelligence John Negroponte was quoted by the newspaper The Washington Post on Dec. 31 that "everything we see evidences it will not be much longer ... months, not years" for the 80-year-old Cuban leader.

Spanish doctor Jose Luis Garcia Sabrido told reporters in Madrid after returning from Cuba last month that Castro, who underwent an operation on July 27, is "in a process of slow but progressive recovery" and does not need feeding tubes anymore.

Garcia Sabrido, who heads a surgery unit at a major Madrid hospital and is described by the Spanish media as a top gastroenterologist, described Castro's condition as "fine." "As you see since 1959, Fidel Castro has not been seen in public for five months, and few medical analyses have been made public since his reported intestinal surgery in July. In Cuba, Castro's health is a long-guarded state secret.

Castro named his brother and defense chief Raul Castro, 75, as the interim leader of the four-Communist rule country in the American on July 31.

And Fidel Castro's absence at a Dec. 2 military parade stunned people and sparked speculation he might be seriously ill, or near death.

Castro also set out the National Assembly's last session of the year, marking only the second time in 36 years that the Cuban leader has missed such a assembly meeting.

There, in a statement released Dec. 30, Castro said he would not ruling his recuperation will be a long process but that "the battle is far from lost." "If officials say privately they have doubts about Garcia Sabrido's assessment of the complication and inflammatory's health. AFP

Attack of zombie computers a growing threat

IN THEIR FRANTIST QUEST TO breach the Internet's defenses, the bad guys are honing their weapons and increasing their firepower.

With growing sophistication, they are taking advantage of programs that secretly install themselves on thousands or even millions of personal computers, lured these computers together into an unwitting army of zombies and use the collective power of the dispersed network to commit Internet crimes.

These systems, called botnets, evolving blessed for the huge spike in spam that bedevilled the Internet in recent months, to wield to financial theft.

Security researchers have been concerned about botnets for some time because they automate and amplify the effects of viruses and other malicious programs.

What is new is the escalating scale of the problem—and the persistent will with which some of the programs are using computers for specific information, like corporate and personal data, to drain money from online bank accounts and worm its messages.

"It's the perfect crime, both low-risk and high-profit," said Gadi Evron, a computer security researcher for an Israeli-based firm, Beyond Security, who coordinates an international volunteers effort to fight botnets. "The war to make the Internet safe was lost long ago, and we need to figure out what to do now."

David Dagon, a Georgia Institute of Technology researcher who is a co-founder of CastleCops, a company fostering an online fighting network, said the systems among scientists is that botnet programs can present on about 1.5 percent of the more than 650 million computers connected to the Internet.

Hackers of viruses and other malicious programs have periodically swept through the Internet since 1988, when there were only 60,000 computers online. Back then, computer security researchers and users have detected up the cleverest and published hides in systems.

In recent years, however, such attacks have become endemic, having increasingly stringent security responses. NYT

Fear grips India village after murders

By Tripti Lahiri

MITHARI, INDIA—SAROJ USED TO play cricket and hopscotch with her friends. Now, the 11-year-old girl and her friends are forced to jump and duck on the rooftop of a shabby tenement.

"I didn't feel like going out more and my mother also told me not to go," Saroj, who lives in Nithari, a squalid village outside the Indian capital New Delhi—and the scene of a horrific series of murders.

Two days ago, the children of Nithari started to vanish without a trace.

Residents, most of them migrant laborers from eastern India who work in factories, or domestic helps or as rickshaw drivers, say that 38 children have gone missing from the village, which is located in largely affluent Noidadistrict.

Six days ago, police quarantined a stone-throw-sized walled dumping area—all that was left of a four (7-to-8-feet, mostly all of them children. The overwhelming search led them to the gruesome find.

Local businessman Surender Singh Pandher and his chauffeur Surja Surender Koli have been remanded in custody in case of rape and murder, but might suddenly say police failed to protect their loved ones and they are embattled.

"If it is only the two of them, then I can feel safe because they are in jail. But if this is the work of a group ... they can even operate from jail," said Prakash Chandra, 15, as the mutilated bodies fell to the floor.

"We don't have faith in the police. The money was with the police for two years," Bilal Singh of the Hindu Migrants' Association explains. "They would tell the villagers, 'We will look but we didn't look. Do they want us to compensate money' to make a room to look for the kids." The policemen have been visited and there is responsible for neglect of duty in the case.

Other fears said they are probing whether the crimes are connected to the illegal organ trade, said an autopsy report said the 17 victims—mainly young girls—had been killed up with "butcher-like" precision.

The duo is undergoing questioning by the police using both women as well are questioned, never to share the murder and the murder of children.

As the children disappeared from Nithari at the rate of one to two a month, many from the alley that runs through the crowded thoroughfares to the main road, residents slowly vanished their children's activities.

Many stopped their kids from going out to play, instead locking them in the tiny cluttered and plastic-wrapped huts rented to new arrivals for 400 rupees ($10 dollars) a month. Others found their children of not going to school.

"My mom already. He is school age and I got scared to send him to school," said Shalik Hindu, a resident of the area—until not rules could have started kindergarten this year.

"You have to go by that road where they used to disappear from," said Shalik, also whose 13-year-old sister Rina was a victim.

Even parents too. He stopped when the children vanished into thin air.

Rina's mother Akhil cries all the time, weeping for the quiet, timid child who loved television soaps, her family said.

Prabhu Lal, the watchman father of 10-year-old Ayan—the first girl to disappear—became a nonconvert.

"My normal away from here after my sister disappeared, but my father said to come to add home—it was like he was fourth time," said he 17-year-old son Rajesh.

"He says all around Delhi searching. We spend whatever we had on this—we sold the house in our family village." Since Ayesh clothes were found among the remains, Lalbari hardly moved from his spot outside Pandher's house—now known as the "house of horrors." "All figure how can these men live in front of the house?" he said, surrounding the house since the bodies were found, pelting it with rotten stones, demanding that the house be torn down and begging for information about the investigation. AFP

SPORTS
Editor Teddyboy S. Melendrez

ECOLOGY

Flagrant foul on RP basketball

COMMENTARY

THE BASKETBALL ASSOCIATION OF THE Philippines (BAP) has committed an unforgivable flagrant foul.

It has acted in total disregard of the interest of Philippine basketball.

Its action has put the sport in a state of confusion.

Its action has created a division in the ranks of Philippine basketball.

Its action has caused the withdrawal of support from the Philippine Olympic Committee.

Its action has caused the withdrawal of support from the Philippine Sports Commission.

Its action has caused the withdrawal of support from the Philippine Basketball League.

Its action has caused the withdrawal of support from the Philippine Amateur Basketball Association.

Its action has caused the withdrawal of support from the Philippine Basketball Coaches Association.

Its action has caused the withdrawal of support from the Philippine Basketball Officials Association.

Its action has caused the withdrawal of support from the Philippine Basketball Players Association.

Its action has caused the withdrawal of support from the Philippine Basketball Referees Association.

Its action has caused the withdrawal of support from the Philippine Basketball Trainers Association.

Its action has caused the withdrawal of support from the Philippine Basketball Scorers Association.

Its action has caused the withdrawal of support from the Philippine Basketball Timers Association.

Its action has caused the withdrawal of support from the Philippine Basketball Statisticians Association.

Its action has caused the withdrawal of support from the Philippine Basketball Secretaries Association.

Its action has caused the withdrawal of support from the Philippine Basketball Treasurers Association.

Its action has caused the withdrawal of support from the Philippine Basketball Auditors Association.

Its action has caused the withdrawal of support from the Philippine Basketball Inspectors Association.

Its action has caused the withdrawal of support from the Philippine Basketball Commissioners Association.

Its action has caused the withdrawal of support from the Philippine Basketball Supervisors Association.

Its action has caused the withdrawal of support from the Philippine Basketball Coordinators Association.

Its action has caused the withdrawal of support from the Philippine Basketball Directors Association.

Its action has caused the withdrawal of support from the Philippine Basketball Presidents Association.

Its action has caused the withdrawal of support from the Philippine Basketball Vice Presidents Association.

Its action has caused the withdrawal of support from the Philippine Basketball Secretaries-General Association.

Its action has caused the withdrawal of support from the Philippine Basketball Treasurers-General Association.

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The dirtiest game in town

OF COURSE, YOU'VE HEARD OF GAMES fixing in Philippine basketball.

We still had heard of those gangsters had supposedly manipulated some game or spin here.

There's also reason to believe some matches had been fixed to the tune of millions of pesos in hidden bets.

Yes, dirty game-fixing was dirty enough.

What could you get squeamish on the issue of turbulence in the national basketball scene.

• • •

Nothing could be subtler.

No other game could be dirtier.

We talk here of the nursery game the basketball association of the Philippines and its president, Sen. Jinggoy Estrada, have cooked up playing.

Estrada and the BAP were supposed to be in the same squad.

But Jinggoy, as skipper, has been hacked, fouled-trouble—and prevented from scoring or winning basket by his own teammates.

Turbulence on the national basketball scene has escalated with the dreaded BAP sector making sure a new record in billionaires was established.

Yes, this is about how SMC-Ginebra suddenly jumped upon its predators.

As noted here on a Sub Now Wait, Estrada are in an enviable position to score a winner that should result in total renovation of SP basketball.

All Jinggoy has had to do was keep steadily and calmer as he dictated.

For the record, Estrada, as president of the BAP and tycoon Manny V. Pangilinan have joined hands and sealed a pact which should effectively result in the lifting by the international basketball federation (Fiba) of its suspension on Philippine basketball.

As agreed, Pangilinan will be president and Estrada chair of the Samahang Basketball ng Pilipinas (SBP), a body composed of well-meaning and responsible sectors in Philippine basketball.

• • •

It was kept from the general public, but this discredited BAP sector had injected Estrada's well-applauded pact with Pangilinan.

The dreaded group, obviously goaded again by the BAP sin-gov Graham Lim, claimed Estrada, despite his noble intentions, had acted on his own.

In repeat, the BAP group had again tried to arm-media to elevate its selfish issues.

It came up with a press release meant to muddle up the scene, but this was thrown into the waste basket by a solid, responsible sector in the national sportswriting community.

• • •

For his part, Jinggoy Estrada played it fiers and proceeded to pursue the formal establishment of the SBP which should eliminately result in the lifting of the Filipino pariahs on the Philippines.

Jinggoy had the dreaded BAP group scuttle out run out of dirty tactics.

The group once fired Estrada, in succession—an unbelievable relaxation equal to tripping a team captain who was driving in for the winning basket.

Estrada has humbly absorbed the foul and accepted the selfish decision by the BAP-based.

• • •

Of course, Jinggoy was not giving up.

He's scheduled to attend a press conference today where he's expected to make a decision.

Meanwhile, the Philippine Sportswriters Association Executive Board is likely to issue a pointed editorial blasting the dirty game being played by the BAP (See page 4).

The PSA has put the Filos in a spot and it would be truly tragic if the ruling body of world basketball would again condone the disgraced deed committed by the BAP.

Truth to tell, in firing Estrada, the BAP has also shot itself in the head.

The Filos must stop fooling purely in the dirtiest game in town.

BARE EYE

Abcede Trinidad

Reyes, 3 other RP pool bets in 3-0 starts

OFFENSIVE champion Efren "Bata" Reyes in serving scene.

Milo Marathon resumes Feb. 4 in Batangas City

PSA Awards for three Mt. Everest conquerors

CHALICOX

ZAPATA

CANDUCE

Athletes' nutrition, welfare top agenda

COJUANCO (right) and Ramirez (second from left) inspect athletes' quarters at the Philsports in 2005. Which does is former chief SEA Games organizer Roberto Pagdanganan.

SPORTSWATCH

6 RP badminton umpires get certification

Coach E classes set in Lipa City

68 fights in San Juan derby today

Bautista, Gorres off for Roach training

BEE "BOOM BOOM" BAUTISTA AND J. "The Dream" Gorres, together with mentor Eddie Villanueva then tonight to Los Angeles to hook up with renowned trainer Freddie Roach at the Wild Card Gym.

Bautista and Gorres will start training in the US for the March 4 "World Cup" to be held in Cebu where they challenge two World Boxing Organization reigning champions.

The undefeated Bautista will take on WBO super bantam king Daniel Ponce De Leon, while Gorres will go up against WBO super fly champion Fernando Montiel.

Villanueva, in an interview the other night in Bacolod, Cebu, said that his two wards are in high spirits and are looking forward to a hard camp under Roach, who is known to popularly know the names of Filipino ring icons Manny Pacquiao.

Meanwhile, Golden Boy Promotions president Oscar De La Hoya is expected in Cebu on their tour this month or early in February to bring with him the World Cup worth $500,000, which will be awarded to the winning country in the Philippines-Mexico boxing duel.

The pictorial, one-of-a-kind, 13-pound, 14-karate gold cup is set with more than 13,000 diamonds, rubies, sapphires, emeralds and other precious stones.

Mentor beat Thailand last year to the inaugural staging of the Boxing World Cup.

De la Hoya is expected to be accompanied to Cebu by GBP CEO Richard Schaefer and vice-president Rik Gomez, as well as international matchmaker now-panel Sampson Lewkowicz.

The third world title bout in the World Cup will pit WBO bantam champ Jhonny Gonzalez against the Philippines' Gerry Peñalosa. Salvio Laguardia, contributor

PICKED: I don't care who the players are.

TORRE: We hope it's an honest-to-goodness score . . . no canned cans.

SYSTEM: Game-fixing is rampant.

BAUTISTA

GORRES

CHESS GAME-FIXING

Grandmaster, 2 IMs, lady player among 7 suspects

By Marlon Bernardino, Court Reporter

A GRANDMASTER, TWO INTERNATIONAL MASTERS, two National Masters, one ranked player and a lady player are being suspected by chess officials of involvement in game-rig-fixing, according to undisposable sources.

The boxscore is withholding the identities of the players until an investigation ordered by National Chess Federation of the Philippines (NCFP) president and Surigao Rep. Prospero "Bosch" Pichay has been concluded.

The source said Pichay himself was shocked that the players, particularly the GM and the two IMs, were involved in game-fixing.

Pichay had announced on Saturday that "at least five players" were involved in game-fixing incidents in various tournaments last year.

"I don't care who these players are, even if they are our best players, Pichay said as he vowed to punish offenders.

The developed as prominent members of the chess community backed Pichay's investigation yesterday.

Asia's first GM, Eugene Torre, said the move to investigate game-fixing in chess," said Torre, also the founding president of NCFP and current head of the federation's players council. "We just hope that it would be an honest-to-goodness one, that no canned cans would be spared."

"The move ... is a step in the right direction," said NCFP executive director Jayson Antiniw. "Game-fixing is rampant in the highest levels of SF chess. Even our young players are being exposed to it."

The 53-year-old Torre said that he himself was a victim of game-fixing during the 1997 National Open, which served as a qualification tournament for the 1998 Chess Olympiad in Thessaloniki, Greece, where the Philippines were second-to-last overall. ... he lost by playing to win.

He said he felt bad that while he was fighting hard to win a match during that tournament, the players on the other boards were throwing their games and even laughing in the process.

Following an investigation, the new-defunct Philippine Chess Federation, led by its president, the late atty. Antero "Bel" Bautista, moved one year suspension on IM Bernardo Roca, NM Vince Mata, Allan Isaac and Mendoza Bingo.

Roca, in exclusive interview, insisted on his innocence in the incident. He, nevertheless, expressed his support to Pichay's move to cleanse the sport.

"It's a good move," he said in Filipino. "I just hope the investigation will be thorough and only the guilty are punished."

Meanwhile, eight men and five women will be sent to the forthcoming Asian Zonal 3.3 Chess Championship slated Jan. 10-19 in Vietnam's Nha Giang province.

The 13 are Gibb Torre, Angelito Sison Antonio Jr. and Mark Paragua, IMs Wesley So, Ronald Dableo, Darwin Laylo, Oliver Barrablaig and fill candidate John Paul Gomez in the men's division and WIMs Jayvee Mendoza, Shimelle Joy Castillano, WIMs Kimberly Jane Casumpang, Catherine Perena and Christy Lamiel Bersabe.

Mexican champ vows to KO Pinoy

COCKY KING: Fernando Montiel

SECOND WORLD BOXING ORGANization (WBO) super flyweight champion Fernando Montiel of Mexico has vowed to stop Filipino challenger Z "The Dream" Gorres when they clash on March 4 in Cebu.

"I will make sure that Gorres does not march the fight and he does not will not risk losing the title by bad decision," Montiel told Charles Wanze of Box Socksia in a story carried by the world-renowned Philboxing.com.

Montiel (32-2-1, 24 KOs), who said that he would soon start training to Guadalajara, Mexico, has been left with no option but to defend his title in Cebu after Gorres' promoter ALI of Sammy Gello-ani outbid Bob Arum's Top Rank for the right to stage the bout.

Montiel, however, did not have kind words for his opponent Golden Boy Promotions, which the accused of favoring Gorres, who is also promoted by GBP.

"Because my contract is reading, Golden Boy has now withdrawn its support for me and has now sided Gerry Peñalosa," Montiel said. "Proof of it is that that fight will be held in the Philippines."

Gerry Peñalosa is also challenging WBO bantam champ Jhonny Gonzalez, but if the latter continues to show apprehension in facing Peñalosa, organizers might opt to replace him with WBO junior fly Sonr Finga Cazares, who will defend against reshow Jirri Bakornag or Rodel Mayol.

Salvio L. Laguardia, contributor

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

TV GUIDE

Monday, January 8, 2007

TV SCHEDULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

SPORTS

LeBron shines as Cavs trip Nets

GOLDEN STATE'S Michael Pietrus gets crowded by the double-teaming defense of Seattle SuperSonics' Chris Wilcox, (left) and Johan Petro (right). AP

CLEVELAND—LEBRON JAMES SCORED 19 POINTS and added a season-high 13 rebounds, helping the Cleveland Cavaliers cap their most successful week in nearly 14 years with a 96-91 victory over the New Jersey Nets on Saturday.

By beating San Antonio, Boston, Milwaukee and New Jersey since Tuesday, the Cavaliers have won four games in five nights for the first time since Feb. 2-6, 1993. It's just the streak they were looking for before departing on a seven-game, two-week road trip.

Larry Hughes and Drew Gooden scored 22 points apiece and Zydrunas Ilgauskas added 16 as the Cavaliers improved to 15-3 at home this season—and 26-3 since March 5 at Quicken Loans Arena.

Vince Carter and Willie Mones had 18 points apiece and Richard Jefferson 17 for the Nets, who pulled within 95-91 on Jefferson's 3-pointer with 17 seconds left.

Gooden gave the Nets a chance to tie it by missing one of two free throws with 0.5 seconds to go. However, Carter misdrew on a 3-pointer with 2.0 seconds remaining and Gooden sealed Cleveland's seventh win in eight games by hitting a pair of free throws in the final second.

Hawks 86, Clippers 74

At Atlanta, Joe Johnson scored 27 points, Josh Smith added 22, and Atlanta downed the Los Angeles Clippers to snap an eight-game losing streak.

Atlanta won for the first time since a Dec. 15 victory at Memphis. It was at home for the first time since beating Charlotte on Nov. 29.

Three-Point Shootout Los Angeles-area 3-point specialists Chris Wilcox, (left) and Johan Petro (right).

BUSINESS

Editor Raul G. Marcelo • Assistant Editor Connie S. Mariano

Farm sector growth seen at 4.7-5% in '06

Poor 4th quarter performance due to typhoons

By Christine A. Gaplcao

THE COUNTRY'S AGRICULture sector was estimated to have grown by 4.7 to 5 percent in 2006 despite the dampening effects of the consecutive typhoons in the third and fourth quarters.

Agriculture Secretary Arthur C. Yap said in an interview that the sector's growth would be within this range though the fourth-quarter results, which are still being finalized, have not been very good due to the typhoons.

"Full year growth in 2006 will not be lower than 4 percent. This is within government's target," Yap said in an interview.

He noted that the agriculture sector contributed significantly to the economic growth in the first nine months of 2006 and only slowed in the fourth quarter. He gave credit to the programs instituted by his predecessor, Domingo Panganiban, who lobbied for the early release of irrigation funds worth P2 billion in the first quarter.

"Early harvests done by farmers during the third quarter saved a lot for the sector, but the expect continued seasonal

(SEE B4)

IN THIS ISSUE

■ **Gov't expects P104B** from nontax revenues /B4

■ **PNB success story** author to take over RCBC helm /B6

141 cases vs tax cheats filed in '06

By Michelle V. Rosso

THE DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE HAS REPORT-ed that the government has filed 141 cases on tax evasion, smuggling and corruption in 2006 as it aims to plug revenue leakages arising from these illegal activities.

Of the cases, 70 were tax evasion and filed under the Run After Tax Evaders (RATE) program of the Bureau of Internal Revenue. There were 26 anti-smuggling cases filed by the Bureau of Customs under its Run After the Smuggler (RATS) program and 45 cases of corruption filed by the DOF's Revenue Integrity Protection Service (RIPS).

RIPS is the arm of the DOF tasked with conducting lifestyle checks among suspected corrupt employees and officials of the BIR and the BOC.

The RATE, RATS and RIPS were established in 2005 as a move to strengthen the government's anti-corruption drive and to encourage the public from evading the payment of proper taxes and duties.

But, while many cases have been filed, the success of the programs is not yet complete as prosecutors have yet to win a conviction. Of the 141 cases filed last year, some are still pending in court and a few were dismissed.

The frequency of the filing of cases has also slowed down. Whereas the programs were first implemented in 2005, the BIR, BOC and RIPS were each tasked to file at least one case a week.

But the DOF said the slowdown only means that the prosecuting agencies were focused on quality rather than quantity in cases filed.

The RATS and RATE also eased to cases to high-profile tax evaders and smugglers, but the programs now mostly charge lower profile

(SEE CASES B4)

Upbeat trading seen

TRADING IS EXPECTED TO BE UPBEAT THIS week as investors keep buying ahead of a good 2007, analysts said.

"This week should be bullish. It's a seasonal trend because it's positioning for the end-of-the year," said Joseph Yuaso, president of Eagle Equities Inc.

BPI Trade Online said the dips last week were normal after the market set new highs. "We envisaged current trading patterns to continue. Corrective signaling appeared as consolidation, with new index highs setting increasingly higher resistance," BPI Trade said in a note to clients.

Paul Joseph Garcia, chief investment officer of BPI Investment Management, said investors were also "pulling their cash to work" by buying stocks with expected robust earnings that, in turn, would keep the market buoyant in the next few trading days.

Good news on the economic front and already-keen investor sentiment upbeat. The government reported last week that consumer prices rose 4.3 percent year-on-year in December, the slowest pace in eleven three years, as the price components throughout the month eased on prices eased.

What would also brighten prospects for companies are lower interest rates, which tend to help companies lower borrowing costs for their expansion needs.

(SPEAKUP B4)

Assumptions, projections and targets

IT'S THAT TIME OF THE YEAR WHEN economists like me are asked about our 'fearless forecasts' for the economy for the year that is just starting. In particular, we are asked to provide the expected numerical values for key indicators of economic performance. It's as if we are in possession of special crystal balls that give us an unmistakable ability to foretell the economic future.

As our title above suggests, there are really three categories of such numerical forecasts that the economist commonly encounters, and we make it the choice of each crystal ball gazing.

Exogenous variables

First are certain economic variables that are conditioned by external market forces, and therefore beyond the control of Filipinos. For these variables, we can only make reasoning assumptions about their values, based on what the experts anticipate. These include the price of crude oil, global interest rates as represented by the London Inter Bank Offer Rate (Libor), and economic variables (GDP growth, inflation rate, currency performance) of our major economic partners like the US, Japan, Europe, and increasingly, China.

NO FREE LUNCH

Cielito F. Habito

We explained the far-reaching impact of oil prices on our economy recently in a resource column (MR, 11-30-06). Its drawing up to proposed 2007 budget, the government has assumed that crude oil price will be in the range of $64-67 a barrel, somewhat higher than the $62-64 assumed for 2006.

Changes in the Libor influence changes in our own domestic interest rates, and therefore the cost of doing business. They also have a profound impact on the government's fiscal position through the cost of public foreign borrowings. The assumed 2007 Libor is.. month rate is 5.6 percent, slightly higher than the 5-6 percent assumed last year.

Educated guesses

Projections and/or targets are made for these economic variables that we do have some measure of control or influence over. These include economic growth (GDP/GNP growth rates), price (inflation/deflation rates), domestic interest rate as indicated by the 91-day treasury bill rate, currency level (nominal or real), government revenues (including tax and non-tax revenues), and so on.

Strictly speaking, projections are educated guesses on what the values of these variables will be, based on assumptions made on exogenous variables, as well as other data—and projection doctors...can be various factors influencing these variables (including economic performance of our trade and investment partners abroad). While projections represent the expected values for these variables, targets are the desired values for these variables that we wish to attain, and will work to achieve. The two will not always be the same, as projections imply a more passive outcome, while targets entail undertaking deliberate efforts to attain them and can therefore be more ambitious.

Reverse targets

One particularly contentious target is the one concerning government revenues. At the close of 2006, preliminary data indicate that the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) is falling short of its collection target (P671.4 billion) by around P30 billion, while the Bureau of Customs (BOC) is exceeding its (P148.4 billion) by about P5 billion.

But BIR Commissioner Jose Mario Buñag laments that the revenue target that is defined by the Development Budget Coordination Committee (DBCC) hinges on assumptions on variables beyond BIR's control. Persistent missing these is the interest rate—which affects the level of taxes collected on interest-income streams of government securities like T-bills, and the amount of such T-bills actually issued by the government. This past year, both have been calculationally lower than earlier assumed.

According to analysts by the Department of Finance (DOF), overvaluation of the assumed interest rates—pegged by the government in early 2006 at 7.5-8.5 percent, but ending up instead at 6.4-6.5 percent—and the much lower than projected government deficit that necessitated less T-bill issuances, accounted for about half (P16 billion) of the BIR's P30-billion shortfall. Even collection shortcomings of bank deposits also short by another P4 billion due to lower interest and volume of deposits realized. One might expect that the lower interest rate would have led to greater investment and higher GDP and therefore more taxable income, elsewhere in the economy. But the DOF analysts also showed that about P6 billion of the revenue shortfall was due to lower than projected GDP growth—again something beyond the BIR's control. That investment actually fell during the year despite above interest rate assumptions, reveals factors...obviously external ones—came into play that led to this further discrepancy.

In short, revenue targeting can be an extremely complex exercise, let alone targeting the rest of the indicators of economic performance. I commiserate with our economic managers...to hold and often fumbling job...for this and many other reasons.

Comments are welcome at chabito@mozcom.com

Upbeat

. . . From page B1

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas expects monetary policy to be more flexible this year in view of a slowdown in inflation in 2006.

Analysts expect the BSP to cut its overnight rates—currently at 7.5 percent for overnight borrowing and 9.5 percent for overnight lending—by at least half a percentage point.

Prospects for the energy sector are also upbeat, according to Citibank Philippines Inc. (Citibank.com, with the privatization of assets held by state-run National Power Corp. (Napocor) expected to contribute about P4-85 billion to the government's coffers.

The amount is most coming from the sale of generating companies (gencos) and bids for the 25-year concession contract of Transco—National Transmission Corp. (Transco) on the month. Elizabeth L. Sanchez

UCPB to sell thrift bank, stockbrokerage subsidiaries

Wants to speed up return to profitability

By Doris C. Dumlao

UNITED COCONUT PLANTERS BANK plans to sell its thrift bank and stockbrokerage subsidiaries as part of an overall strategy to speed up the organization's financial turnaround.

In a recent interview, UCPB president Jose Que admitted that on top of the planned disposal of almost P20 billion in bad assets this year, the bank would streamline its subsidiaries and branches to boost revenue streams as well as build up its low core deposit base to take up the slack in loan demand.

UCPB earlier merged two bank subsidiaries—UCPB Savings Bank and UCPB Bank—creating the country's 14th biggest thrift bank with P147 billion in assets and 34 branches.

"That's capitalized at about P13 billion and if we sell at 1.5 times book (value), then we can earn P19[illegible] billion," Que also said.

UCPB Savings Bank, the surviving entity, ranks 5th highest in return on equity within the thrift bank industry at 19.66 percent, 6th highest in terms of total deposits with P5.16 billion and 10th highest in total loans with P2.08 billion.

The thrift bank is no stranger to mergers. UCPB Savings Bank is the product of the merger of four thrift banks in 1986 while UCPB Bank Bank emerged out of the merger of 12 rural banks in 1991.

"We're looking at rationalizing other subsidiaries, not just the savings bank," Que[illegible] said, noting that the bank had already pulled out of the property business by unloading the[illegible] property subsidiary.

Despite the rationalized stock market, Que[illegible] added that the bank would likewise sell its stock brokerage unit UCPB Securities.

"We also have a leasing company but we may have to keep that because the bank[illegible] used the leasing as the core, I think, for lending," Que[illegible] said.

He said UCPB would rationalize even its branch network to make sure that the ones that are not profitable would be relocated to more viable areas.

Excluding the network of its thrift bank subsidiary, UCPB has 156 branches, 108 of which are in Metro Manila.

Another strategy now paying off is the build-up of low-cost deposit base or the current account and savings accounts (CASA). The bank's CASA is now hitting the highest levels in the bank's history with an average daily balance of about P27.5 billion or about 35 percent of its total deposit base.

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Don't compromise.

What do you look for in a bank? Is it the interest that interests you? Is it reliability? Or is it even (gasp) the parking space?

If it is reputation, then would it matter if it has the strength and stability of an international bank? Or would you rather have the warmth and friendliness found only in local banks? Would it matter if it had branches as far as Bo-ko or Zamboanga? How about as far as London, New York or Shanghai?

Is it the assets then? Would you invest in one that has more than US$10 billion? Or on one that banks (no pun intended) on accolades and recognitions like "one of the top 20 banks in Asia"? Would it matter more if another bank claims to belong in the "top 1 (0) banks in the world"? Would you rather open an account with a bank that promises high interests? Or one that offers easy and effortless reconciliation?

But who said you have to choose when you can have them all? When it comes to your hard-earned savings, why compromise?

What if all along, I tell you now, I have been talking about just one bank?

What are you looking for in a bank again? If it is all of the above, then my bank is the one for you.

My bank is Maybank.

Maybank

Politics poses threat to fiscal reforms, HSBC says

By Dodo E. Dumbo

HSBC has expressed concern that politics will derail the government's fiscal consolidation efforts and delay the passage of robust bills needed to foster economic growth.

In its latest commentary on Philippine bond markets, HSBC analyst Dilip Bhaban said investment President Arroyo's ability to deflect impeachment calls from opposition political parties and other vested interest groups," the report said.

HSBC also sees no reason to upgrade its country sovereign credit prospects for the Philippines in the first half of this year given the role the general elections will play in determining the country's medium-term economic and financial profile.

"Similarly, we do not expect Standard & Poor's, Moody's or Fitch to alter their current ratings of BB-, B1 and BB, respectively, until the implications of the general election outcome can be fully interpreted," the report said.

After years of belt-tightening, HSBC said in its report that it expected the government to spend more, particularly on desperately needed infrastructure projects. As the President gets up for political battles, it said public finances were bound to be loosened.

"In fact, slippage from the administration's ambitious deficit target at P63 billion in 2007 appears almost inevitable," the report said.

"Without further increases in tax revenues, we estimate a rise in [last year's elevated pace. Therefore, the budget deficit in 2007, probably too, is likely to be on the neighborhood of P200-120 billion, certainly not the slow-out of earlier years but sufficient to end doubt on the government's target of a balanced budget in 2008," it warned.

Apart from possible slippage on the fiscal front, the HSBC report said the weak inflow of investments would remain a concern in the years.

It noted that the country's investment to gross domestic product ratio – already one of the lowest in Asia – had continued to decline over the last six years despite buoyant and fast growth.

Bank keeps RP credit rating, will wait for May election results

Atlas mining project gets tax perks

By Bernard W. Dandoy

THE BOARD OF INVESTMENTS (BOI) has granted tax perks to a subsidiary of Atlas Mining Consolidated Mining and Development Corp., which is set to complete a P12.2-billion mining project in Toledo City, Cebu, by November.

According to the BOI, the project of Lutopco Copper Corp. was to be registered with the agency on a temporary status, which qualifies the firm for a four-year income tax holiday, duty-free importation of capital equipment and other fiscal incentives.

Lutopco Copper applied for pioneer status, which would qualify the firm to an ITH of up to six years, but the BOI said the project's size of a supposedly pioneering technology had not yet been confirmed by the Department of Science and Technology.

The firm would mine and mill copper ore and produce a yearly output of 11.2 million dry metric tons of 42,000 metric tons a day.

The ore is expected to yield a total of 46,377 DMT of copper, 41,066 ounces of gold, 147,866 ounces of silver, 102,865 MT of pyrite and 166,286 MT of magnetite.

The consumption of mining water is expected to open economic development in the area, and create 3,000 new jobs.

Last week, the company announced it was working with Deutsche Bank AG on a $300-million loan – guaranteed by the Philippine Export-Import Credit Agency – to help fund the refurbishment of the copper mines, which was shut down in 1994 due to flooding less copper prices and debts.

Gov't expects ₱104B from nontax revenues

By Michelle V. Rosca

THE DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE HAS EXPECTED that the government would raise about P104 billion (the year from nontax sources of income, such as privatization of state-owned assets, investments in foreign securities and dividends from state-owned firms.

According to a DOF report presented during the recent Cabinet meeting, P45.7 billion of the expected P104 billion worth of nontax revenues to be collected this year will come from the sale of public assets.

The expected revenues from privatization were much bigger than the original target of generating only P600 million from the sale of state-owned assets.

State-owned assets that are targeted to be privatized this year include the 46-percent share in Philippine Telecommunications Investment Corp. (PTIC), or stocks in Philippine Shell Oil Co. ("Member") and Chemical Corp. (SMC), interest in state-owned MWSS and IBC 13, its interest in Luzon Bank and Philippine Petrol Corp.

The DOF has begun distributing the legislators concerning the sale of the government's shares in SMC and Meralco.

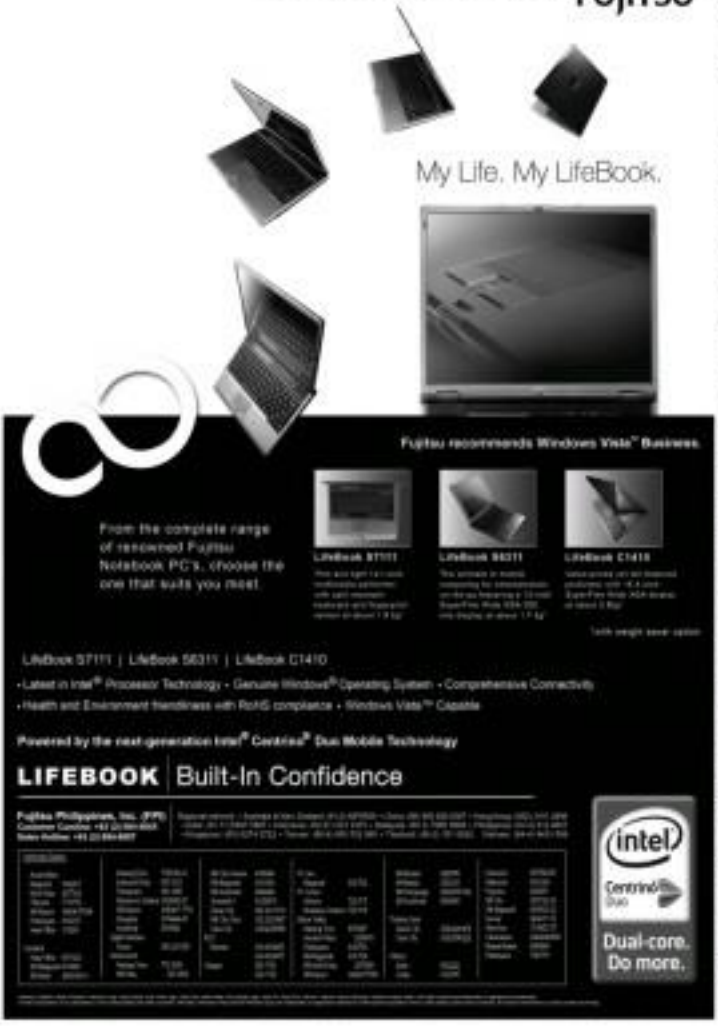
In the case of MWSS, the DOF's privatization unit was working on a composition with the mutual's creditors for the sale to push through.

Aside from privatization, income by the House of the Treasury forms part of the nontax revenues collected by the national government.

Of the P165.5 billion in nontax revenues, more than half, or P85.5 billion, will come from the BTr.

BIR income includes earnings from investments in foreign-denominated securities, including Off Treasury bills and dividends of the national government from its shares in state-owned firms.

The DOF also estimated that government would generate P14.4 billion worth of other income, which includes fees and charges collected by government agencies from the public in the delivery of their services.



GOINGS-ON

Biotechnology summit set

Farm ...

141 cases ...

RP-Taiwan trade up 4.5% in first 10 mos of '06

By Bernie W. Dumlao

TRADE BETWEEN THE PHILIPPINES and Taiwan increased by 4.5 percent to about US$6.69 billion in the 10 months to October as the two economies make headway in developing a growth corridor that links special economic zones on both shores.

Taiwan's Government Information Office or GIO reported that the island economy bought in goods from the Philippines worth some $2.39 billion as of the end of October.

This represents an improvement of 2.67 percent in orders from Taiwan from about the same period of 2005.

At the same time, Taiwan sent to the Philippines goods worth $3.7 billion, up by 5.64 percent from year ago level.

Development of growth corridor linking economic zones planned

In the January to October trading, Taiwan maintained a trade surplus of about $1.31 billion, increasing by 11 percent from $1.18 billion.

GIO data further showed that the Philippines remained the 13th largest trading partner of Taiwan accounting for 1.77 percent of its total global trade and as Utah's 87 billion.

Among developing countries, the country has become Taiwan's fifth largest trade partner after Malaysia, South Arabia, Thailand and Indonesia.

The Philippines was still the 11th largest destination of Taiwanese exports with about 2.1 percent of its outbound cargoes valued at $175.96 billion.

In the previous month, the country was the 16th largest source of Taiwan imports. It accounted for 1.42 percent of the total imports of the island economy worth $147.39 billion.

Manila and Taipei signed in December 2005 a memorandum of agreement on economic growth corridor that links the Kaohsiung freeport area to southwestern Taiwan to the Subic and Clark special economic zones in northern Philippines.

Lan Ouyang, the director general of Taiwan's Export Processing Zone Authority said both governments had just concluded a meeting in which policies that would help develop the growth corridor were discussed.

Nina chief Meling-Yun Tseng said Taiwan now allows a 90-day stay for Filipino workers who want to undergo training there.

Normally Filipinos—like other foreign workers bound for Taiwan—must have an employment contract of up to two years, renewable for a third year. Such worker is allowed to serve two contracts for a total of six years.

Tseng added that a "more common" cross-border movement of labor are one of the main concerns of Taiwanese firms that were interested in doing business in the Kaohsiung Subic corridor.

He said Taiwan's Council of Labor Affairs had agreed to process visas for Filipino workers, whose employers prefer over other foreign workers for certain jobs.

Filipinos working in sensitive factories spread across nine economic in Taiwan number at least 6,700 or 42.2 percent of all foreign workers deployed in the island economy.

Investment Grade of Available Life Insurance Contracts	Valuation Date 31/12/05	Valuation Date 12/01/06
PEX Ind' Dollar Bond Fund	1.3819	1.3859
PEX Ind' Global Bond Fund	1.1891	1.1930
PEX Ind' Pan Emrg Currency Fund	1.0819	1.0881
PEX Ind' Euro Equity Fund	1.1218	1.1286

German firm urged to invest more in power generation in Mindanao

By Abigail L. Ho

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO is urging German firm during ACI to consider putting up additional power capacity in Mindanao by expanding its existing capacity or building a new plant.

Energy ACI is inaugurating today its 213-megawatt (MW) Mindanao Coal-Fired Power Plant.

"The story of this Mindanao Coal-Fired Power Plant is one of the crucial means in addressing the challenge of assuring stability in the supply of electricity in Mindanao. In fact, its full commercial operation during the last quarter of 2006 has contributed significantly to the reliability of power supply in the Mindanao grid," Ms. Arroyo said in a statement issued by the Department of Energy.

Completed ahead of the January 2007 schedule, the $300-million power facility's backbone in commercial operation since November last year.

The plant's full commercial operation pushed up the Mindanao grid's reserve margin from a critical 13.4 percent to 29.6 percent in November 2006. The required reserve margin for the grid is 21 percent.

Apart from increasing the grid's reserve margin, the operation of the new coal-fired power plant also reduced the total installed cost of oil-based plants in Mindanao to 11 percent from between 20-percent and 32-percent.

The coal plant contributed some 16 percent to Mindanao's power generation mix, which hydropower continued to dominate at 43 percent.

With the commissioning of the plant and the transfer of their power barges with a total capacity of 75 MW from the Panaon grid in 2005, the energy department said the Mindanao grid now needed 454 MW in additional capacity from 2009 to 2014.

"This additional capacity would be enough to meet the projected 6.4 percent average yearly growth in peak power demand, the DOE said.

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Faulty math of women's right advocates

WOMEN'S RIGHTS ADVOCATES continue to fight for a bigger share of the national lawmaking, their arithmetic is faulty.

Their claim is based on the fact that the population is 51 percent female. To be fair, they say, the female participation in every line of work—whether in the private sector, in politics or elsewhere—should be at least close to this figure. Just take executive positions of the Supreme Court as only 27 percent of the total 15, there should be eight lady associate justices.

The arithmetic is faulty. The advocates have not considered one factor: by God's plan, child bearing is a woman's critical responsibility.

In a month, child rearing, during heaven, is still a woman's sublime profession. We should stop using the adjectives "mere" when describing a housewife.

I wonder if the National Statistics Office has any data on how many of our women, with college degrees from the best schools, choose not to pursue career outside the home and instead devote time taking care of the children. Are they wasting away their college education? Of course not. At the very least, the mother helps the children with their homework.

The equation changes when the number of women who stay home to take care of the children are deducted from the total female population. Perhaps then, the lady associate justices of the Supreme Court are too many. But if a woman is brilliant enough to be the chief justice, God's fine with me.

Don't misunderstand me. I want the Filipino woman to pursue a career if she will be good at it. Once I was in a court hearing. The witness was a woman, about 30 years old. The female prosecutor and the defense lawyer were both women, well-coiffed and good looking. The elderly male judge was thoroughly enjoying the show unfolding before him.

In fact, if not the world, the best place for a woman to be is in the Philippines. The ties between wife helps her husband in the field, but she is never allowed to survive business hurdles. In a restaurant, the waiter serves the women first; in other parts of Asia, the women are served last. The Filipino woman was her right to vote 60 years ago, the Kuwaiti women had voted last year. Even if she comes from a poor family but is bright enough, our universal educational system allows the Filipino woman to earn a doctor

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PNB success story author to take over RCBC helm

NTC rushes to beat election period, mulls over 5-year plan

By Rica T. Chicombre

THE NATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS Commission (NTC) plans to take a long, hard look at its existing five-year plan spanning 2004 to 2009.

But believe it can get down to business, the regulator needs to deal with new service applications and renewals before the election period starts on Jan. 14.

The election period covers 45 days before and 45 days after the May 14 elections. This year, that period ends on June 13.

During the period, limiting and awarding of projects, among others, are banned, according to Comelec set by the Commission on Elections (Comelec).

The NTC said telecommunications services may be disrupted if service applications are caught in the election ban.

Commissioner Abraham Abayasin and his chief of staff, Atty. Dyhanne, told reporters that several en banc sessions had been held since December to get the applications going before Jan. 15.

Abayasin also told reporters that the NTC would soon create a technical working group (TWG) to review the five-year plan after parading applications from banned entities.

Among the TWG's tasks are: To update the current leadership of what has been accomplished; determine which projects, if any, are behind schedule; and make recommendations on how to ensure that all targets are met by 2009.

"We need to study what has been done before we proceed," Abayasin said.

Among the projects in the five-year plan were: The promulgation of rules and regulations and other guidelines on emerging technologies, such as WiFi, VoIP, and 3G by mid-2004; full ICT interconnection in the country by mid-2006; a fully automated national frequency management system by mid-2006; the establishment of digital broadcast standards by mid-2006; universal ICT access for all municipalities in certain areas; and 50 percent of communities in rural areas by mid-2009; and, the operation of a national radio monitoring system by mid-2009.

According to the plan, these targets may be achieved by streamlining procedures, conducting public consultations and hearings, encouraging private sector participation in NTC programs, advocating the enactment of laws penalizing illegal cable and other connections, creating technical working groups that will focus on priority projects, conducting an inventory of all networks and initiating interconnection, establishing data banks, and modernizing universal access.

So far, the targets reportedly met were the classifications of bidets user IP as a value-added service, the reallocation of 5G radio and a pattern for shooting frequency harmonies, the establishment of rules against predatory pricing, and dark policies on digital TV and fair competition.

The plan over all accomplished under the watch of former NTC Commissioner Ronaldo Solis, who left office at the end of November.

Trade veterans Virata, Navarro to make way for Tan in RP's 10th largest bank

By Doris C. Dumlao

TAN

REAL COMMERCIAL BANKING CORP OF THE Yuchengco group will mark a changing of the guard on Feb. 1 when Lorenzo Tan, architect of Philippine National Bank's financial turnaround, takes the country's 10th biggest bank to become its new CEO.

RCBC on Friday announced the retirement of two veterans, Cesar Virata and Bienvenido Navarro, and the hiring of Tan as executive vice chair and CEO of the bank, replacing Navarro next month.

Tan, president and CEO of Sun Life Financial Plans Inc., earlier led PNB and CAP United Coconut Planters Bank.

Under the new leadership, RCBC hopes to strengthen its capitalbase over the next 12 months.

Asked about what he hopes to achieve for RCBC, Tan said: "My plan is to grow RCBC organically, and through acquisitions. My plan is to grow our #3 and #4 market business, Chinese market, the C market, the provincial and overseas Filipino workers' business.

Tan also expects to see "technology (and) innovations to compete and grow our business."

In an interview, Tan said that there would be healthier, stronger and more efficient banks in the Philippines due to consolidation, as well as stiffer competition and capital adequacy requirements.

In the month of June (4th), Tan played a pivotal role in raising the life and mutual funds business by over 70 percent, and boosting the pre-need performance of the country's second largest insurance company by more than 30 percent.

At CBC of PNB, Tan was credited for returning the bank to profitability through an aggressive rehabilitation program in 2000.

RCBC chair Helen Dee will act as CEO until Tan assumes office.

According to Dee, Tan is expected to continue the reforms that Navarro had started to increase the bank's capital and

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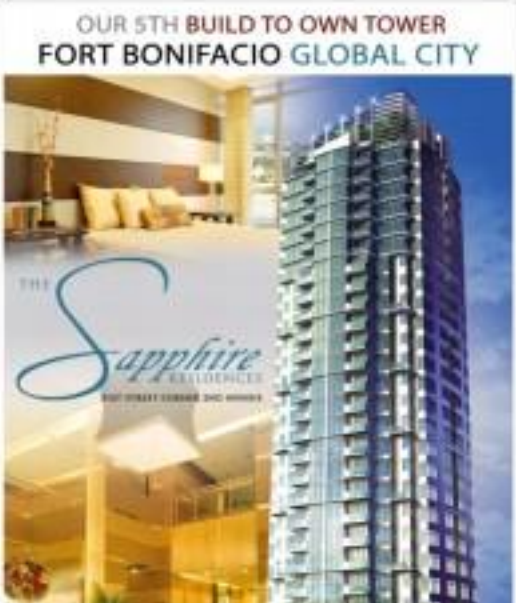

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Developer sees a 'good month'

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

PROPERTY DEVELOPER MEGAWORLD CORP. is upbeat on its stock rights offering, saying it has been met with positive feedback from investors, according to Megaworld chair Andrew Tan.

"The response has been very strong," Tan said. "We expect new subscriptions. A number of stockholders indicated they wanted to subscribe more than the allotment ... this is going to be a very good month."

Megaworld earlier set the price for its stock rights offer at P1.80 apiece, hoping to raise roughly P4.5 billion from the company's existing shareholders. Megaworld is offering 2.9 billion common shares, covering a 2-for-5 stock rights offer. The offering closes tomorrow, Jan. 9.

The price was set to encourage readers to participate in Megaworld's offering and provide investors for existing shareholders.

Under the terms of the offer, each eligible stockholder is entitled to subscribe to two rights shares for every five common shares held as of the record date Dec. 11.

Megaworld will use the proceeds from the rights offer to fund projects in 2007 and 2008.

Of the P4.8 billion Megaworld hopes to raise, P4 billion will go to the development of City Place Hotel, business process outsourcing buildings and retail projects in Manila.

About P1 billion will be set aside to expand Eastwood's BPO office building. Some P5 billion will be used to buy prime properties, while P1 billion will be set aside to working capital for residential condominiums in Forbes Town Center, McKinley Hill, and Manhattan Global City in Taguig.

To its disclosure, Megaworld said additional sales of P1.6 billion would be booked during the last quarter of this year from its Eastwood and Fort Bonifacio projects.

Megaworld executive director Kingson Sian said Megaworld aimed to book sales of P30 billion in 2007, with contributions from its six projects in Eastwood, Forbes Town Center, McKinley Hill, Newport City, Manhattan Garden Square and City Place.

Megaworld over the next few years will focus on six key projects: The 13-hectare township development called Eastwood Cyberpark in Libis, Quezon City, the five-ha Forbes Town Center, a joint project at the Fort Bonifacio Global City; a 20-ha mixed-use project on McKinley Hill, Fort Bonifacio; the 25-ha Newport City, a hotel and golf estate in Pasay City; the 3.7-ha Manhattan Garden City project underdone with the Araneta Center Group; and the 9.6-ha Uptown project in Bacolod.

DOF cautions gov't in meting out tax, duty-free incentives

By Michaela V. Ramos

THE DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE WANTS THE government to exercise caution in formulating the 2007 Investments Priorities Plan (IPP), saying that the goal of wiping out the budget deficit must take precedence over the grant of fiscal incentives to businesses.

In a draft memorandum to the Board of Investments (BOI), the DOF said that the giving of incentives should be consistent with ongoing efforts to rationalize the system of granting tax- and duty-free perks to businesses.

"The IPP will be directly affected by the ongoing incentives rationalization and fiscal consolidation measures of the government," the DOF said.

Concerned agencies, led by the BOI, are already in the process of drafting the framework for the 2007 IPP.

The IPP, which the government reserves annually, is a list of industries and business activities that will be covered by fiscal incentives.

Industries that were granted incentives under the 2006 IPP included agribusiness, health care and wellness, information and communications technology electronics, marine vehicle, energy-related projects, tourism, shipbuilding and shipping, jewelry and fashion garments.

Incentives enjoyed by businesses belonging to the industries mentioned, include an income tax holiday, duty-free importation of capital equipment, exemption from wharfage, and exemption from local business taxes.

The DOF, the agency in charge of managing the government's fiscal resources, is strongly pushing for the rationalization of fiscal incentives granted to businesses.

The deficit-ridden government is said to be losing huge amounts in potential revenue from the careless grant of incentives.

According to the DOF, the government loses about P388 billion in potential revenue every year due to the grant of tax and duty-free perks.

The DOF wants to minimize the losses by taking away incentives that are considered "redundant."

Redundant incentives are those that are given to businesses which would have invested in the Philippines, anyway even without the tax- or duty-free privileges.

According to a study commissioned by the DOF and authored by Dr. Renato Seraile of the University of the Philippines, 80 percent of investment plans of businesses registered with the BOI were redundant.

A bill rationalizing fiscal incentives is now pending in Congress.

Under the bill authored by Sen. Ralph Recto, fiscal incentives should only be granted to businesses that are export-oriented, and to those that are located in the country's poorest provinces.

The government posted a budget deficit of P146.8 billion in 2005. For 2006, the government expected the budget gap to fall between P86 billion and P90 billion.

The government aims to further reduce the deficit as only P63 billion this year, and to post a zero deficit by 2008.

BUSINESS

BSP reviews 'fit and proper' rule blacklist

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BANGKO SENTRAL NG PILIPINAS is reviewing and rationalizing its list of people barred from entering key positions in banks and quasi-banks.

An Internet source said there were about 700 people blacklisted under the "fit and proper" rule of the BSP on bank officers and directors.

"The BSP is reviewing the list to ensure that those in the list really deserved the bad label," the source said.

He said there were someone that some of the people in the list might not have been given due process, or have already passed themselves worthy of a better record.

Some in the list may be removed, says BSP exec

In a separate interview, BSP Deputy Governor for bank supervision and examination Nestor Espenilla Jr. said it was then under the rules that before anyone could be included in the watchlist—whether temporarily or permanently—it must be approved by the Monetary Board upon the recommendation of the supervision and examination sector of the BSP.

"We're reviewing the list and looking at records to see if there are people who should be removed," Espenilla said.

Under the BSP's "fit and proper" rule, persons with findings of overdebtedness, culpability or administrative liability, as may be determined by other government agencies, may be disqualified permanently or temporarily from holding key positions in banks or quasi-banks.

The causes of disqualification depends on whether the individual involved or an individual is final and executory, still pending appeals or if the sanction imposed is merely suspension or monetary penalty.

Those permanently disqualified from holding director or officer positions are those who have been convicted by final judgment for offenses involving dishonesty or breach of trust—such as embezzlement, malversation and extortion, and people convicted by final judgment for bribery, falsification as well as violations of the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act.

Persons who refuse to disclose any material information to the BSP when required pursuant to a provision of a law or regulation, and bank directors who have been absent for more than half of all meetings of the board during their incumbency may be temporarily disqualified.

But directors and officers temporarily disqualified for certain irregularities or on the basis of derogatory information may be given a chance to show themselves after showing good and profitable reasons or after a lapse of five years from the time the bank of the derogatory record was cleared.

As such, Espenilla issued a new circular requiring all banks and non-bank financial institutions to submit an authorization form to the BSP's bank examination and supervision department where making queries regarding the watchlist files of the BSP for the purpose of screening and clearing applicants and confirming elected directors and appointed officers.

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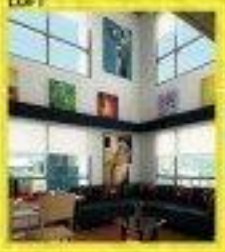

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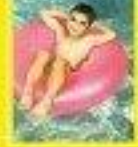

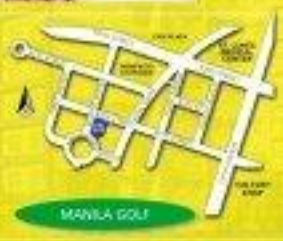

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Pricey music dropped from ring tones list

By Riza T. Olchondra

TELECOM COMPANIES IN THE PHILIPPINES and Indonesia have dropped most international songs in their mobile music repertoire barring users from such downloads, video music downloads and ring tones because of a legal dispute with some music publishers, the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry (IFPI) said.

IFPI represents the interests of the recording industry worldwide.

In a report posted on its website, IFPI said the recording industry would still be able to offer domestic and some international repertoire, but was keen to reach consumers with its full offering.

"The industry is working to help resolve an agreement between the international publishers and the telcos to ensure the availability of most international repertoire in these countries," it said.

Local record industry association Philippine Association of the Record Industry Inc. confirmed the IFPI report, saying that the country's two major mobile service providers—Smart Communications Inc. and Globe Telecom Inc.—recently withdrew most international repertoire from their music download menu after the local international publishers sought royalties higher than the rate charged by local producers.

"Smart and Globe had started cutting back as early as October," Dayl Alain Chatterjee-Dy told the Inquirer.

Ramon Monzon-Jr., executive director of Universal, Sony BMG and Vehicle Music Inc. handled a number of music creators in partnership with Globe and Smart Telecom offering master recordings of top international artists including Beyonce, Black Eyed Peas, Coldplay and Madonna.

The record companies, represented by Dan, local musicians' Union local publishers, license at 20 percent royalty per track. International publishers, however, are seeking double that rate.

Sensing he is isolated, Dan was reported that its members should stop offering international songs even though the matter is always at best possible legal proceedings. The telcos chose to cut both on foreign songs.

"We are very disappointed with the recent developments," he said. "By depriving the Philippines of exciting mobile music services, the real losers are going to be the consumers. The music industry can not afford a dispute which will stunt the growth of our legitimate market and we'll encourage music fans to find the tracks they want on the pirate services."

Insurance body goes full blast on computerization

THE INSURANCE COMMISSION HAS scrapped the delivery of 100 brand new computers last week as part of its ongoing program to computerize and upgrade its capability to serve the insuring public and supervise the insurance industry.

The Commission also expects the delivery of 50 printers and six servers, as well as the installation of other systems in the coming weeks.

"We are computerizing for the construction of a sophisticated data center to house the enormous amount of data and reports that are submitted by the more than 140 insurance companies," said IC Commissioner Evangelina Bautista.

"We hope to finish the data center by April this year and have it running by the second quarter of 2007."

In February last year, the IC launched its website www.insurance.gov.ph. Since then the commission has been providing a lot of public information on matters pertaining to existing and current developments more accessible to the insuring public.

PC BUYER'S GUIDE

MONDAY, JANUARY 5, 2009

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

B7-8

BUSINESS Monday

Business Features Editor Margie Quiroga-Espino

Are business schools businesses?

A look at why even the best RP schools are not at par with the world's best

By Eduardo Morato Jr.
Professor, Asian Institute of Management

ARE GRADUATE SCHOOLS OF business businesses? Or are they part of society's educational mission to help build nations and develop competitive industries?

This debate was sparked by the question of a graduate school president who asked his faculty: "What is our business model for the business school?"

This caused a collateral response from a faculty member, "Shouldn't we be talking first and foremost, what is our education philosophy and mission?"

There is a tremendous need to become a sustainable education-driven institution. We need to pay a topnotch faculty in order to deliver the best possible education to students coming from all over Asia.

Without government subsidy and a huge endowment was there, it is extremely difficult to compete with Asian schools which do not rely on tuition fees alone to lure students with the highest GMAT scores and faculty with the best academic credentials.

If a Philippine school were to rely solely on tuition fees, then it would be forced to accept students who were offered to pay high fees but whose academic qualifications may not be at par with the best.

The mission of education is much too important to be left to the vagaries of the market place. That is why primary and secondary public education in the Philippines is given free.

In richer countries, education is subsidized by the state or highly subsidized by private benefactors and philanthropists up to the post graduate level.

Favorite beneficiaries

In an Asia wide study of High Net Worth Individuals (HNWIs) conducted by the Asia Pacific Philanthropy Consortium, the favorite beneficiaries of HNWIs are educational institutions.

How come health institutions as a distant second. In Asia, the top business schools are heavily supported by their governments.

Those include the National University of Singapore, the Indian Institute of Management, the Melbourne and Sydney universities of Australia and the Chinese University of Hong Kong.

These schools compete for the best students with generous scholarship offers.

Some like MDS and IIM have relatively very low tuition fees to serve their national mission.

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What it takes

What does it take to compete as a regional graduate school of business?

International accreditation bodies are looking for several things:

First, is that at least 30 percent of the faculty should have doctoral degrees.

The top graduate schools of business in Asia have 100 percent of their faculty with doctorates.

Second, they determine whether the faculty are regular contributors to the academic body of knowledge we manage. ment through reputable publications and conferences, research undertakings and high profile consultancies.

Third, they evaluate student entrance test scores, with GMATs hovering at 650.

Fourth, they review curricula and syllabi according to anticipated objectives on the management knowledge, skills and competencies that students should learn.

Fifth, they review the placement records and career development of the school's graduates.

Sixth, they interview alumni, revealing corporations and other schools to verify and validate their findings.

Seventh, they expect the deans, associate deans, and academic directors to be highly respected academic pillars who are truly first among equals. They are not looking for mere administrators who do not have the proper academic pedigree.

All this makes the mission of attaining world-class status as an international graduate school of business a formidable and very expensive proposition.

One can have PhDs galore coming from third rate institutions and attain the 30 percent minimum requirement, but that's cheating.

One can come up with career student resource center to approximate quality but that's also cheating.

One can project and, even, fabricate the image of being a great school, but sooner or later, the truth will come out.

First to complain are the recruiters. Next, the better and more qualified faculty will begin questioning their very own school. Third, enrollment will drop.

Economic considerations

In the face of the quality and sustainability dilemma, the question remains: Should a world class business education be a business or a social mission?

Sheer economics considerations make it difficult to run a quality business school as a business.

International faculty based in Singapore or Hong Kong could easily get $8,000 to $10,000 a month.

If rent includes housing, health care and other benefits, an additional $5,000 should be added. This comes up to an average of $13,000 a month or $9 million a year.

If the faculty were expected to devote at least 25 percent of their time to quality academic research, this would balloon the couple payroll by 25 percent, excluding expenses for researchers, travel and other research support requirements.

If all these cash outflows were measured, the school either has to charge astronomical tuition fees or go for huge numbers of students.

High tuition fees would shrink the market considerably, fixing the numbers would jeopardize quality standards. Being both would most drastic because the school would be forced to take in a lot of sub par dumb students.

In the United States, even reputable business schools support

(AM BUSINESS SCHOOL)

UP is RP's best school

FOUR PHILIPPINE universities made it to the top 500 in the world, based on the THES-QS World University Rankings.

THES-QS is a three year old ranking system that claims it is one of the few organizations that have attempted to tackle the task of ranking universities throughout the world from a global perspective.

THES stands for The Times Higher Education Supplement—a weekly newspaper dedicated to providing academics with the information they need—from job listings to news to research findings while QS is the world's leading network for careers and education.

Highest ranking

The University of the Philippines had the highest ranking among the Philippine universities included in the list.

UP ranked 299 in the 2006 list—a big jump from its 372 rank in 2005.

De La Salle University ranked No. 392, La Salle's arch rival, the Ateneo de Manila University, was much lower at No. 684.

The University of Santo Tomas made it at No. 500.

For two consecutive years, the top school in the world based on the Rankings was Harvard University of the U.S.

UK's University of Cambridge was No. 2, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology dropped to No. 4 in 2006 from No. 2 in 2005 list. UK's University of Oxford climbed to No. 3 from No. 4 in 2005.

INFOTECH

Online developing for digital photographers

Mozcom, Fuji YKL team up to launch Picatoo

By Abigail L. Ho

CAPITALIZING ON THE popularity of digital photography, Internet service provider Mozcom and Fuji YKL have joined forces to launch online photo developing service Picatoo.

Picatoo business development manager Tin Leya says the new service allows users to develop their digital images from the comforts of their own homes or from anywhere with an Internet connection.

"We saw an opportunity to [digital photography developing] because of the growing number of digital camera owners and their need for a user-friendly and reliable online printing solution," she said.

"With so many digital photos stored online, it only made sense to create such a service, taking cue from the success of similar ventures in foreign countries," she added.

While digital photography has made storing and sharing photos electronically almost the norm, Picatoo believes that this trend has not eliminated the need for traditional prints that can be passed around during family gatherings and special events.

Considering today's busy and fast-paced lifestyle, Picatoo is designed to make printing digital images less of a hassle.

All a user has to do is to go to the Picatoo website, www.picatoo.com, and create an account.

Designed to be user-friendly, Picatoo can be used even by individuals with a minimal understanding of technology as photos can be uploaded using a Web browser using very simple drag-and-drop operations.

The photos are printed using the Fuji Digital Minilab Frontier developing system, which, Leya says, creates near "photos that will last a lifetime."

Picatoo allows users to have their digital images printed in conventional sized 4R prints or even as photo posters with sizes of up to 12x18 inches.

Each print is printed the same as traditional photo prints, with a typical 4R price starting P6 apiece.

Prints are then delivered to a free to the customer's home for a minimum purchase of P250 for Metro Manila or P300 for areas outside the land.

Aside from digital image printing services, Picatoo also offers customized mugs, calendars, mouse pads, T-shirts, and other items.

All payments are made online, with the site accepting all major international credit cards, plus BancNet and Mega Link ATM accounts, Globe G-Cash, Smart Money and SCPB myETime.

Like fishing for anchovies

By Art Villasanta
Contributor

THE INTERNET IS ALMOST THE right place to land big bucks working jobs from foreign agency.

You can find legitimate job sites such as Craigslist.org for worldwide working jobs; lower your job hunt offer on Digest.com if you want to work in Dubai; just type "data me" personal ad on Bbdb.com and search the long job list on Filipinosonline.com, a great resource for Pinoys who serve in English.

You can also visit Google.com, Yahoo.com or Ask.com and type your job hunt query in their search boxes. You can then spend the next two hours hacking through the tremendous amount of data dumped into your FireFox or IE browser.

All the websites open a treasure of possibilities, but handling everything 100 from foreign job posters sometimes feels like you're fishing for anchovies in the middle of the Pacific Ocean using a hook, line and sinker.

And if someone throws mud just with a job offer, you've got to figure out if you can wipe this foreigner.

A lot of the shady operators you'll bump into are con artists, "spammers," "phishers," click-per-view scoots and sales guys selling software they claim will make you an Internet millionaire. Pshhew!

Free replies

I applied to over a hundred jobs on the Web on about a dozen sites in 2000. I got just five solid replies and landed just one job that paid me less than P1,000, and this one a referral from a friend.

One job site in the United Kingdom didn't pay the 200 pounds they said they'd pay for a many I sweated my guts, flesh. Silly me for believing anyone would pay 200 pounds to a total stranger in a place called The Philippines.

Despite an ex-IT company in Shanghai said they were impressed with my resume and would e-mail me again, which they never did. A writer in the United States dropped off the radar when I gave him an hourly rate. Turns out that he wanted to pay me a week of what I earned.

A PR company in Hong Kong had the courtesy to call me on my cellphone and we talked about job prospects. The man e-mail I got from the company said the girl in charge of the job had resigned and they couldn't access her files.

Insulting offers

Craigslist.org is a great site for international working jobs. Only trouble is the rest of the world thinks working is cheap and Filipino workers even cheaper.

There was this one job posting from someone in the United States that said he'd pay the princely amount of P10 for every 200-word story he approved. P10! That's probably what my father made per story in the 1960s! And he was an experienced and famous editor.

For the life of me, I can never understand why a lot of folks still labor under the delusion that working is so easy you can pay writers what amount to short wages even if it would inflate.

Serious writing is always a tough job. You can't write intelligently unless you've done a groundbreaking rather than say between your ears.

That's why good writers do research, write, re-write and re-write and interview when needed.

So they use it ICE. It's Ulpo or "garbage in/garbage out." A silly writer once said, garbage in/garbage out." That's what he's got in his head.

A smart writer, on the other hand, will give you work that done the job and more besides.

Before job-hunting on the Net, however, I did my homework and read stories warning against exposing too much from personal job sites. But I decided to take the plunge for the same reason whose man into OPEC a shot in The Big Three.

Trust factor

Craigslist, which is based in the USA, urges browsers of its website to avoid scams and fraud by dealing locally. They're right.

The key phrase here is "dealing locally." Face-to-face is really the best way to get a job and deal cuts only happen if the job posted and the job hunter happens to be in the same country.

A great natural from some idea is a hit off Asian country can't replace the trust factor, meaning an employer would rather meet the person he intends to deal with. Same goes for the worker.

Then there's the matter of how these hardcore guys will pay you. If they decide to pay you. We know the power's from the United States if he offers to pay you via PayPal.com or Xoom.com. Xoom's now in the Philippines but PayPal isn't.

That leaves you with the option of having your client make out to your brother or sister in the US or Canada and asking him or her to send you the cash by door-to-door. Dysfunctional siblings will have a problem here.

So, most home's a writer going to even access cash given the bad odds of getting a good freelance writing job on the Internet?

Your guess is as good as mine.

Programmers to blame for hard-to-use software

NEW YORK—BITFIED MISCHIEVOLOGIST Dinna Westmoreland is no stranger to technology—except when it comes to computers.

"The programs are intimidating. The language that's used is a foreign one to me," said Westmoreland, who lives near Guthrie, Pridea. "I'm the sort of person who, when something crashes, apologizes to the screen."

The problem, says consultant David Platt, lies not with the user but with the programmers, who just don't think like the people who use their products.

Platt is a computer science instructor at the Harvard University Extension School and the author of a new book called "Why Software Sucks ... And What You Can Do About It," published by Pearson Pls and Pearson Education.

Pet peeves

One of his pet peeves is when a text-editing program like Microsoft Word asks users if they want to save their work before they close their document.

That question makes little sense to computer novices accustomed to working with typewriters or pen and paper, he said.

For them, a clearer question would be: "Throw away everything you've just done?"

Boxes that ask users to confirm whether they want to take a step such as deleting a document are another example of what he calls a bad feature.

"Your car does not ask, 'Do you really want to start the engine?' when you turn the key," Platt said.

The confirmation box has become so overused that no one pays any attention to it, even when it's warning about a document that already has been lost.

It's not messages represent software communication at its worst, Platt said.

In his book, he recounts how after trying to save a webpage from his browser because he received a message that said it couldn't be done and gave him no choice but to hit the OK button.

"Yes, it is not OK with me that this operation didn't work and that my options aren't explained why," he wrote.

Your users fail you

Platt, who has also written nine books for computer professionals, has a message for software developers: "Your users fail you. Not. You."

People who write software programs value control. The user, on the other hand, just wants something that's easy to operate.

Many software programs come with features—like the ability to move the menu bar—that the average person does not want or need.

David Thomas, executive director of the Software & Information Industry Association's software division, disputed Platt's assessment of computer programmers.

According to Thomas, the trouble with software programs is that good ones often get overloaded with features demanded by "power users," such as big corporations or social individuals.

To meet their more software browsers have fine-tuned, he said, companies can more easily monitor their users' experiences and improve their programs with frequent updates.

They have a financial incentive to do so, since more consumer traffic results in higher subscription or advertising revenues.

"They know that if they don't make the customer experience enjoyable that the customer will stop using them," he said, "whereas if I sell you a [software] product, I don't care if you use it or not. I have your money."

Long way to go

There is one area, however, about Thomas and Platt agree: the Web still has a long way to go.

Too many websites start off with home pages that offer animation, music—and no real information.

"Every time I want to look at an article and I have to click to get past that multimedia thing, it drives me crazy," Thomas said. "They should be monitoring the fact that 90 percent of people click on 'close' within a certain fraction of a second to get away from that thing."

Web search company Google Inc. and photocopy-chain-turned-Web-hub Kinko's are said to provide easy-to-use websites, but others are still more complicated than they need to be, Platt said.

Platt urges his readers to let them know about software problems by posting feedback on their websites.

"The best companies want to hear from users," he said.

He also advises consumers to check out what users say the software customers have to say about a product before they buy it and to post their own comments on websites that sell the programs.

However, individuals can only do so much, and he is working on forming an organization called "It Just Works" (http://worksbecause.com) to track the good programs and criticize the bad.

AP/UPI/RWS

McCann Worldgroup RP has new CCO

MCCANN WORLDGROUP Philippines achieved a major coup by winning over local creative icon Ariel Ureta to assume the role of chief executive officer by mid-February next year.

CASTRO

Ureta, known for his success with award-winning and effective campaigns for brands both global and local brands, will be Worldgroup's first chief creative officer (CCO). He is tasked to advance creative standards across the multidisciplinary (task record) to achieve company and to play a key role in New Business...as seen where Castro's proven track record is achieved edged.

The CCO appointment follows the recent public launch in the Philippines of McCann Worldgroup's new Demand Creation philosophy and multidiscipline marketing communications approach to driving top line business growth for clients and brands. The role of the CCO was created to ensure integration of creative ideas across McCann Worldgroup's seven distinct disciplines of heritage, and enhance collaboration and synergy among disciplines creative teams.

Are business schools . . .

Press page/Bus 2

ed by the government maintain an army of alumni relations personnel whose job is to raise funds.

The strategy is three pronged: (1) obtain more support; (2) raise funds from alumni and philanthropists; and (3) change high tuition fees from rich to less wealthy students. Some all over the world on the strength of its reputation.

Low rankings

In general, Philippine universities rank relatively low in international rankings.

A major cause of our low standings is the resentment/envy of teaching jobs compared to industry opportunities.

If the job seeker has no strong vocation for teaching, then he would not really seek it out. And yet, top schools avail the top brains of the land. If schools pay premium to their teachers, then they would get more

keys working for them.

Another major cause is the low priority given by Philippine schools to academic research that comes up with original thought, new theories and novel paradigms.

Very few professors in Philippine business schools, endeavor to write graduate level books and refereed articles.

If it needs easier and more accounting for them to be consultants to large business firms. As research, it is a "no reward" situation. The result is the proliferation of Philippine business professors who are forever preaching the likes of Porter, Kotler et al. They have very little contribution to the international body of knowledge.

Quality business education among the world class mature mature service partly as business proportions. If they were, then they would lose their trainers and benefactors who are providing funds because there is a high social and economic cost of what is in society, in general, and the business community, in particular. If these donors perceive that the school is no longer living up to its social mission and is becoming a business, then they would donate their funding haunts.

While it is good for schools to charge tuition fees at market rates [if there are enough sub but qualified applicants], it would be foolish of them to charge that the full costs of running a world class business school could be adequately covered by such.

The school has to appeal to social investors and education philanthropists. However, the school must be very clear that it is primarily setting an education mission with a very clear education philosophy anchored on the highest expectations of its stakeholders. Then it stands a chance.

Anti-snob zoning and environmental footprints

THE STARS, THE INCONVENIENT TRUTH with former US Vice President Al Gore premiering, and the speech of former President Fidel V. Ramos last week on "Investing in the Environment" admonishing Filipinos to be more caring, sharing and daring, inspired me to share the "inconvenient truth" about our 600-year-old situation: Zoning by Segregation.

The Inclusionary zoning, or more popularly known as anti-snob zoning of the State of Massachusetts, requires the inclusion of affordable dwelling units in all urban developments. The law has influenced the development of higher density multi-family, mixed use, mixed income, more generational, walkable, bikeable, and livable charming neighborhoods in Boston/Cambridge-core-suburban area.

The rest of the 50 states are trying to adopt the anti-snob zoning. The theories of London and Brisbane in 2000 were declared to the world that there would be no more gated communities in their cities. The fall of the Berlin wall integrated the then divided city Berlin. After the fall of the wall, Berlin underwent into a very progressive global city.

There is a new paradigm shift from our Spanish colonial practice of "inclusiveness" (within the walls) for the "illustrados and Principalia" and "exclusiveness" (outside the walls) for the "indios," "tagalogs" and peasants in 16th to 19th century, or the American post war 1950's plan. Zoning is the segregation of income class and land uses, gated low density single family homes. The absolute practice of zoning by segregation has resulted in our disjointed and fragmented cities, towns, and communities. We shape our environment and our environment shapes us.

My professors at Harvard Graduate School of Design state that 21st century will be inclusionary zoning. Previous century was exclusionary zoning.

'RP century

21st century will take be a "RP" century; Inverted, Redevelopment, Reuse, Retrofit, Re-connect, Rebound, Reborn, Rebirth and, Finger, Urban Renaissance. This urban redevelopment will likely happen in the "Inner Ring" suburbs built earlier (1950's and 1960's), the post-war suburbs which are today in the middle of central areas of the metropolis.

In 2000, the American Planning Association declared that single family detached houses in low density gated communities in the middle of cities are "consumer luxuries" having large environmental carbon footprints because they prevent more families to live more in their places of work, thereby encouraging more urban sprawl to encroach into the forests and farms.

Shelter is considered a must need. Nonetheless, housing has become an unaccountable element, with rents and housing prices skyrocketing beyond the means of many.

Evidently, one's income has not kept pace with the escalating rising rents such as transportation, health insurance, childcare, and particularly housing.

Finding a decent place to stay is a harrowing more and more difficult for the middle income earning Filipinos. The result is most Filipinos live many from their places of work, only a privileged few live close to business districts.

The average number of commuters working in the Makati Central Business District spends more than 3,000 hours a year, that is in five hours a day in traffic. Elsewhere in the more progressive cities of the world, workers, employers, and executives commute to work less than 300 hours a year. Imagine the millions of man hours we lose and the air pollution from cars, buses, and jeepneys.

Disparities

An extreme challenge in Metro Manila is that there are pockets of juxtaposity in the midst of an inept poverty.

There are disparities between very low density single family home, gated communities, the middle class & luxury condo's and informal settlements. Almost 90 percent of the occupied housing units are single houses, mostly owned by the more affluent close to the Central Business District (CBD).

Places close to the business districts and their environs provide low density, high cost, living, a problem to middle income earning Filipinos who mostly work in the city but live far away.

Residential developments have opted to segregate income classes, subsequently isolating lower income households in older poorer neighborhoods very far away from their places of work because that is the only place they can afford to be.

Although there is improvement in the water and electricity facilities, decent housing for the urban poor households has been left behind.

Apart from the problem of housing affordability, there are also problems in the lack of housing supply and accessibility, especially in the CBD's, which is surrounded by low-density single family residences.

Metro Manila's population is anyone between 10 million and 11 million people at night, resulting in air pollution due to transport vehicles, rush hours, traffic congestion and long hours of commuting for a greater number of people.

In the Makati CBD, the daytime population is reportedly 11 times the night time population. The jobs and housing imbalance, or residential deficiency is estimated to be 35,000 to 36,000 dwelling units. By 2020, the deficiency is estimated to be 140,000 to 200,000 dwelling units.

Inclusionary for diversity

One of the remedies to these problems to "anti-snob zoning" or inclusionary housing, a new financial development that not only provides housing for the high income bracket, but also caters to the middle to low income.

It requires developers to include affordable homes when they build a particular number of market-rate homes. Inclusionary housing and mixed income housing rely on a strong residential market to create below-market units.

This kind of development assimilates families for diversity income to create a vibrant neighborhood and alleviate economic segregation. Inclusionary housing provides better accessibility to the need of every family, especially to transportation terminals, places of work, and social services and access to better schools and hospitals.

Inclusionary zoning and mixed income housing integrates what traditional zoning segregates—zoning families, retired and elderly, households, single adults, and households of all types.

Inclusionary housing includes a portion of the development at values that low to moderate income people can manage to pay for its rents, developers are given a density bonus, which gives them permission to build more units (the local zoning regulations would not usually permit).

Highrise have been used to the roots of housing and concentrating the poor outside the central business districts. Income housing can prevent an opportunity for other families to enhance low income earning Filipinos and bring them back into the social sphere. This kind of residential development creates affordable housing many from the conventional neighborhoods of poverty.

Inclusionary practices

The new and coming in Massachusetts contain local zoning and land use regulations to be superseded if at least 25 percent of the residential developments were inclusionary homes.

In the Philippines, Ayala Alabang allowed one of their sister districts, Dasmariñas, employees housing where residents enjoy the same benefits as the other higher income neighborhoods.

Inclusionary impact

Inclusionary housing can be incorporated, by transforming single family homes into small family townhouses or garden apartments like those in progressive cities close to or within business districts, together with the high rise office and commercial buildings. Instead of constructing low-density developments in the proximity of these districts, developers could build or rebuild buildings into affordable multi-family housing units. Incentives could include benefits from their single family homes to multi family residential developments. With this, local businesses will have a larger workforce near their places of work, which will further promote more opportunities in commercial establishments and other businesses. It will boost local economic development by creating more staff housing and by stabilizing the income of businesses and low-income households.

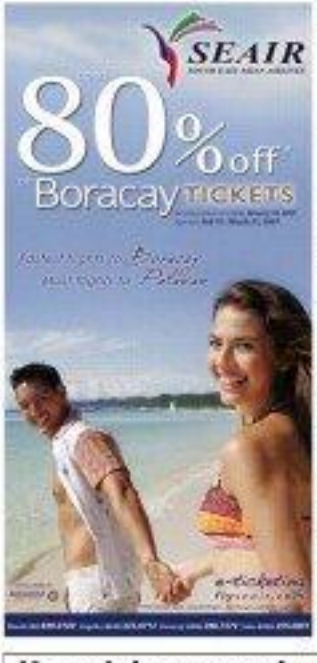
Urban decongestion will present problems like flooding, water shortage, road density, and traffic jamming. Transportation, utilities and other services will now be spread equally coping with the new population and home growth.

Inclusionary housing does not only aid low and moderate-income individuals but provides them such housing they can afford; it also helps create integrated neighborhoods where households from different professions and social backgrounds live within the same community.

The author is founder of Philplan Associates. This article reflects his personal opinion. Feedback at mapping@skynet.com.ph.

MAPPING THE FUTURE

Felino Palafox Jr



BUSINESS Monday

Division of authority

BETWEEN NOW AND MARCH, the accountants and corporate secretaries will be busy preparing the year-end reports that their clients are required to submit to the regulatory agencies.

It's an annual ritual that corporations have to go through under pain of administrative or penal sanctions.

Although the fines imposed for failure to submit reports/documents/requirements may, for some companies, not be a cause for concern, the main deal smackers are the sanctions it is something that professionals prefer to avoid.

Word about less than satisfactory performance could have adverse effects on the reputations of the errant accountants and lawyers.

What reports should be prepared and to which office they should be submitted to depends on the nature of the business.

Primary license

For corporations whose relationship with the Securities and Exchange Commission is limited to the certificate of registration or its primary license, the following reports need be submitted:

- Financial statements;
- General Information Sheet;
- Compliance with by-laws provisions on number of directors, their qualifications and compensation, dividend declarations and

Corporate Securities Info
Raquel Fudalbrica

inspection of the corporate books.

Through these documents, the SEC can determine whether these corporations comply with the law's minimum requirements for legitimate operation.

In addition, the public can take a look at these records if they want to know more about the operation of the corporation in the people running it.

For these reasons, the law requires the accurate and timely submission of these reports.

Failure to conform to their accreditation with the SEC (or even their license) if they are found to have misrepresented the facts and figures of the financial statements.

Directors will likewise be liable severally to the truth of their submissions. In bad old' nasty. They—and their clients—still can be spared disciplinary action for this offense.

Secondary license

The reportorial requirements are more stringent for corporations that, in addition to the certificate of registration, were issued a secondary license by the SEC.

In this category are financing companies, investment companies, investment houses, pre-need companies, brokers dealers and stock (or trading) exchanges.

The foremost denominator of these companies is, they sell stocks, securities, and other financial instruments to the public on the promise that they will receive profits or other forms of financial benefit somehow in the future.

Aside from the Corporation Code, these companies are governed by specific laws, such as the Investment Houses Law, Financing Companies Act and Securitization Act of 2004.

The SEC exercises direct supervisory authority over these corporations.

The law, however, unless expressly exempted by law, will promote or distribute their products to the public without prior clearance of the SEC.

These companies are required to submit monthly, quarterly, semi-annual and annual reports, depending on the nature of their business.

If the circumstances call for it, the SEC can compel them to submit certain reports within a 24- or 48-hour notice.

The requirements on accuracy and timely reports equally apply to these companies, and with more vigor on account of the sensitive nature of their business.

Other licenses

Corporations that are grantees of secondary licenses or franchises from other government regulatory agencies are treated differently.

Banking and quasi-banking institutions, building and loan associations, trust companies and financial intermediaries, insurance companies, public utilities, educational institutions and those governed by special laws are supervised by the government office that issued their secondary license or franchise.

Insurance companies are supervised by the Insurance Commission. The National Telecommunications Commission looks over telephone companies.

Private corporations are obliged to file with the SEC only the kind of reports that companies that hold primary licenses or certificates of registration are required to submit.

All other kinds of reports that relate to the operation of those specially-regulated companies have to be filed with the government offices that issued them secondary licenses/corporate.

The information in this column may be read in full in SEC Memorandum Circular No. 11, Series of 2003. Feedback at rfudalbrica@inquirer.com.ph.

Hyundai names winners in the 2006 Dealer of the Year Awards

Hyundai Asia Resources, Inc. (HARI), the exclusive distributor of Hyundai vehicles in the country, gathered all its dealers for its 2006 Dealer of the Year Awards (DOYA) at Dream on the Square, Greenbelt 3. Assembling the event with "Are Ikon" theme, HARI dealers danced the night away with the Ikon music of the Guerrero band.

Ms. Fe Perez-Agusto, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of HARI, expressed her gratitude to the dealers. "What would have taken a decade or so to carry out, we have pulled off in only five years because of our committed dealers who are Hyundai's greatest ambassadors in South East Asia".

Among HARI's 20 dealers nationwide, Hyundai E. Rodriguez, Sr. Avenue bagged the 2006 DOYA as well as other awards in various categories. Award of Excellence in Holistic Sales in Metro Manila and the Award of Excellence in Service Operations. The Award of Excellence in Holistic Sales in the Provincial category was awarded to Hyundai Cebu, Inc. Hyundai La Union received the Award of Excellence in Parts Operations, while Hyundai Commonwealth Inn was bestowed with the Award of Excellence in Fixed Sales Management.

Individual awards were also conferred to the sales consultants and parts personnel who have exerted commendable performance in their posts. The Sales Consultant of the Year Award was bestowed to Wilma V. Barbajan of Hyundai E. Rodriguez, Sr. Avenue for Metro Manila category and to Hommer C. Soriano of Hyundai Dagupan for the provincial category. Abigail M. Ramos of Hyundai Laguna, Inc. was awarded as the Champion, Parts Personnel of the Year, followed by Ms Jocelyn-ay Lubiz C. Chaind Hyundai E. Rodriguez.

"The Dealer of the Year Awards (DOYA) is an annual event organized by HARI, honors dealerships and individuals who have given exemplary contributions to Hyundai's growth in sales, after-sales service, and parts operations.

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LIFESTYLE
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Art of the 'carpe diem'

"Shared Solitude"

Mia Herbosa seizes the day

By Victoria T. Herrera
Contributor

THE HOLLYWOOD FILM "Dead Poets Society" (released in 1989) popularized the Latin phrase "carpe diem" to the youth of the 1990s as a call of admonition to live life to the fullest.

Mia O. Herbosa, now in her 40s, belongs to that same generation to whom this call had perhaps the most meaning then. In her exhibition at the Alliance Française de Manille, she appropriates that phrase as title but with a different twist.

Now a young mother, Mia has further developed into an introspective artist. Instead of subjecting the multimedium issues to "seize the day," she quietly "takes a journey" (the literal translation of the Latin word "carpe") to reflect over her life story.

The artist's personal introduction to the exhibition relates a particular fascination over her great-grandfather, Alfonso Grageo, whose personal art collections was instrumental in launching her to the arts, the writer.

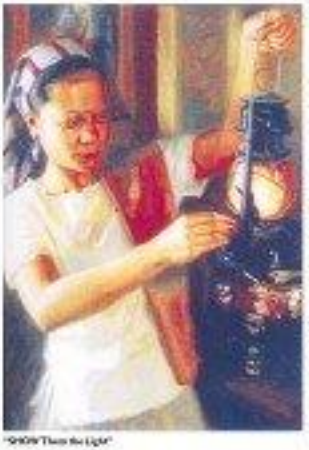
"Growing up, I often stared at the many wonderful oil paintings on the wall of my father's home... Though his (Alfonso's) beloved collection is now no longer intact, I feel, in a great way, his passion for art and history has left its mark on his family... We captured his world to share with us today. In my own way, I try to capture mine, in this way, both our life some together, bridging the gaps of time, sharing a place in the fourth dimension, Carpe Diem."

"ILUMINADO Duggin" (above and right)

Duggin is recognized for his contributions to Philippine art both as a collector and a gallery owner. He was one of the founders of the first commercial art supply store in the country. He later opened his own store and art gallery. Duggin was also self-taught in painting watercolors. Some works loaned back from his collection still have the inscription "Iluminado por A. Duggin" on the reverse of canvases.

2 out of 3 Filipinos are proficient in English.
Let's make it 3 out of 3.
Study at:
VERNON TAPALLA'S
Confidence Building • Speech Assurance • Public Speaking • Writing

Cebuano artist looks back—and forward



"SHOW Them the Light"

By Gino Dumroque
Contributor

HIS COMMON PLACE THE SOUTH, BORN in the island of Bantilan, and raised in Cebu City, subtle, and humble surroundings, he was exposed to an early. Today, Adonis Orquiola is an artist of the people with Adonis he shows an affinity for the pursuit of a better, and more humane life. His personality in art has not changed a bit.

In his seventh solo show this June ever in Metro Manila), titled "Memories of a River," (Art Gallery, 3/F The Manila Peninsula Hotel, Makati City opening Jun. 11-14), Adonis also showcased signature scenes in his past, the evolving of his artistic life, revealing the good old times that our people love to imbibe in this crucial period of history, where survival is at most in our social agenda.

Adonis has growing from the land that has bred the likes of Martino Abellana, Bonifacio Saracho, Antonio Meñalvez, Bonifacio Sabanig and Gig de Pio, all of whom have given their incredible origin and through that of hard work and God-given talent have all made a name. The images he has chosen to depict in his canvases are indeed timeless as they are beauty- all that is beautiful about the Filipino inside out.

Hyperrealism

Guided by a persuasive sense of hyperrealism that is far from being contrivedly photographic, Adonis includes a glow that is factual yet moving, the subtleness of personages as well creating the intimacy of a lived-in interior.

A graduate of fine arts of the University of the Philippines, Cebu, Adonis has developed knowledge of the subjects he captures in the mood centered temporarily blend memories as an open concern. Every sensitive brushing with artful consciousness, adonis unleaves caught in daily toil, rotary laundrywomen resting pooly by the gurgling brook.

These images may initially seem superficious to the untrained eye who eschews the panoply of local color by way of cultural lure. A paradox may, however, spring unbeknownst to the artist's dramatic brushwork to convince, be instructed from the lens, the general tend the beautiful, and all the enduring qualities of the Filipino come to the fore—love of work, of family, of the good and gentle light, as lovingly portrayed by the woman who lights up the room with her presence.

What radiates Adonis's nostalgic heroics to the past is the strong spirit of collective endeavor which has, time and again, brought out the best in our countrymen. The Filipino is never alone, never idle, never without a family nor a class to work for and share blessings with. The message of solidarity, a tapestry more eloquently in a larger of self-reference, evident which pervades, may be the one strong point that will lead us in the pursuit of the Great Human Hope.

E-mail author at gdumroque@yahoo.com

"FIRES Revive"

"YOUNG Lumukans"

"HARVEST"

Visual Arts

"AFTER the Rain"

Asia Art Gallery opens at Mall of Asia

The Philippine-owned Asia Fine Arts Gallery of the SM Mall of Asia. The new gallery is located on the 3/F of the Entertainment Mall in SM Mall.

"THE SONG of Life"

Bandoy at Magnet

Magnet Gallery Power Plaza Center, Power Avenue, Salcedo Village, Makati, presents an exhibit by Angel Bandoy "Savouring the Divine." Jun. 10-30. There is an exhibit featuring Bandoy's recent oil-on-canvas paintings, collages and works in acrylic. Call 27.1788 or e-mail magnet@edsa.digitalx1.com or visit www.magnet.com.ph.

Photo-exhibit at Rizza Renzo

Rizza Renzo Gallery, Solaire and Cathy Lim Architects Plaza, 170 Salcedo Street, Legaspi Village, Makati, presents the first international solo of photographer Gabriele Marcia entitled "Destinations." Jan. 17-Feb. 12. The exhibit features 45 works/photos of Marcia works that showed Call 840.8562 or 843 or visit www.rizzarenzo.com.ph.

Photo-exhibit at Greenhills

The Jewellery Gallery of the Second Floor of the Greenhills Shopping Center is holding "Balintawak Bansil: Pilipinolohiya? Ito Iyon ang..." a photo exhibit. The photos are of the children, culture, adventurous and still life. The photographers are members of Kodak Camera Club, a photo-sharing site started by Yahoo!. The show runs from April-Jun.

Philippine medicine history conference

The Philippine Association (Central Library) of the University of Santo Tomas is holding the First International Conference on the History of Medicine in the Philippines Jan. 5 and 12 at the Medical Center Auditorium. Professor Roberto Hechanova Gomez of the Department of Surgery, Faculty Medical Center with the UST Faculty of Medicine and Surgery, the oldest medical school in the country, the conference is convened by Fr. Angel Aquilizan, O.P., UST prefect of Libraries and Dr. Raquel Reyes of the Department of Anesthesiology and also the Library of the College of Oriental and Islamic Studies of the University of London. The conference aims to bring together for the first time a diverse range of health-conscious professionals, scholars, students, researchers to explore the history of medicine in the Philippines from the 16th-20th centuries. Conference fee is P1,000. Call the UST Miguel de Benavides Library (731.3104, 406.1611 local 8208, or 406.1611 local 8209).

Modesto at Ayala

Fernando Modesto's "Manipulations (Installations)" will run Jun. 9-23 at the Silverson Space, Ayala Museum, Makati Avenue, Makati City. A number of the paintings depict Modesto's familiar daily-life field of pursuits, of kisses and games, some flowing from a surreal canvas, in others a heavily inspired spread. Modesto says these have been themes of Pacific Rim literary classics from Spanish storehouse for the familiar human form. Abstract painting revels, needs to catch observation, that Modesto attempts to make this work of art.

Modesto's exhibit of 50 to 60 works will be on to reveal the sensitiveness of the artist's "Sagittarius," best collection of form. She summarizes as a remarkable series of

faith, to believe what one sees, or rather what one believes to be seeing. There are often times that an intelligence from above threatens my life and my family. Other times, I have been visited by the Blessed Mother. Modesto is a graduate of the University of Santo Tomas and took studies at Goldsmiths, Master's School of Art and Design in London. He has extensively exhibited internationally since the 1990s.

Campos prize history exhibit at UST Museum

The UST Museum of Arts and Sciences will open "The Revolution at 50: The Struggle and the Glory of the Campos Prize," Jan. 15 at 9 a.m. The exhibition is held as for the 2006 Centennial Year celebrations of the University. Other exhibitions at the museum open at 8/F and the only campus place to house an entry in the Cultural Center of the Philippines Encyclopedia of the Arts for having produced top journalists, writers and novelists. No ticket entry. Call 406.1611 local 8208 for more information. Museum hours are Tuesdays-Saturdays 9 a.m.-5 p.m. and Sundays 9 a.m.-12 noon.

Kudlac Talamik at Lopez Museum

The Lopez Memorial Museum is to host Kudlac Talamik's Talk with Artist Episode 2 on Jan. 25, 2 p.m. The talk is entitled "Kudlac Talamik: Artist and Educator" and will be a discussion about the artist's 30 years experience in Visayan teaching a college community to document its traditions, some of which are fast disappearing. Some of the talks will provide for the artist's life-size mural tableaux, masterpieces awaiting a well-kept for-citing, which are coming, relevant to Lopez Museum's current exhibitions, "Pasig Lopez: Art and Technology." As viewers approach the figure with his "bamboo cannon," and will see the artist in his role. The Lopez Museum is on the ground floor of the Benpres Building, Exchange Road corner Meralco Avenue, Pasig City. Call 637.9437 or e-mail lopezmuseum@yahoo.com.

The new face of the Angono artist

By Constantino C. Tejero

ANGONO, THE LAKETOWN in Rizal province, for long has been reputed as a breeding place of artists. Here art is very much a part of the everyday environment here.

This probably the only province town in the country that has registered two National Artists, Carlos "Botong" Francisco for the Visual Arts and Lucio San Pedro for Music. Prominent artistic descendants such as Penafrancia Avelino, Jose "Pitok" Blanco and Nena Mirasol, to name a few, have established their reputations.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the belief of artists inside that setting don't run counter-out of the town's walls from Filipinism and folk art. The regard with which the phenomenon of art is accepted includes.

So, it was a rather radical shift when the Angono-based artists' group Surrounded by Water first started up with their avant-garde works. Led by Vice Rendel Tuason, the group has always been strongly vocal on the forefront of contemporary Philippine art.

A third generation of Angono artists has gathered in a multimedia group called New Angono Artists Collective, composed of painters, visual artists, musicians, writers, dream people, cultural workers. These contemporaries have not really cut their roots in Francisco and San Pedro, but they are moving on.

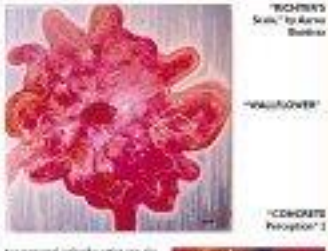
A foundation contemporary of Tuason, who also ends up finally here, major in painting, at the University of the Philippines College of Fine Arts, is Aaron Bautista. Here is one of those who may be regarded as the best of the new Angono artist.

Consider his exhibit "Concrete Perception" (now in mixed media on canvas, recently at the Philamlife Center, Roxas Service Avenue, Ermita, Manila).

Bautista had done realistic, literal paintings prior to his Bengal Rose Series and Figurative Expressionism.

Before shifting to abstract Expressionism. Quite a few years ago, he cites as influences on his latest work such names as Jackson Pollock, De Kooning, Rothko and Kidney.

"RICHTER'S Scale," by Aaron Bautista



"WALLFLOWER"

"CONCRETE Perception" 2

"THE DEEP"

The exhibition was described, these pieces as "improvised in the use of primary colors to dramatize and heal the undercurrent of tension." Details, psychedelic trance, lacquering and so forming."

He don't know about the "lacquering and so forming" part is that's for personal only the artist can describe it.

As for representative painting, as, why the piece "Richter's Scale"—with its dominant flashes of yellow and planes of blue and red, the earth and sky analogy to light—would seem to illustrate that.

"Wallflower" is dominated by red on white blue, but with an unusual usage of what looks like red amoebas, a pool of blood or a take on Warhol's flower. It's about the size of supermarket in color than in color totality.

Another piece, "Abstraction," is dominated by red suggests haphazardly applied, with black splotches on edges, but again we wouldn't cut this a color expert's speculation.

Another is "Concrete Perception" 2. With its swooping strokes of gray and black on a background of blood-red gradating into Rothko-red, this looks like an abstract rendition of Bautista's "Hood."

Many of these pieces, so far, are rendered in experimental colors but in a manner because of your eyeballs, such as "Perception 1 and "Untitled."

The most exquisite of this monochromatic abstraction is the circular piece "The Deep," done in cobalt-blue, green-gray, gets spectacular liquid effect at the edge. It's like looking out at the horizon at a swell but of pleasant beach.

Looking at these pieces, one can very well appreciate how this young Angono artist is trying to go as far away as possible from Botong Francisco.

"SALA"

"THREE Hats"

Art of the 'carpe diem'

From page C1

Photography

In this exhibit, Mia gives us a glimpse of so-called "different interests"—photography, the grandchildren—the artist's mother Flavine (a firstborn), and aunts, Jovanna Dugan and Cynthia O. Valdes...remember the many self-portraits to photographs their grandfathers had accumulated through the years.

And it is from this recollection of autobiographical images that the young artist had selected two portraits to recreate a connection with her late Dumbo.

One of these shows Alfonso carrying his first-born son Luis. Both are dressed in the fully possible for the infant's baptism.

The other portrait is more intimate in scale and candid in pose. Alfonso, wearing a white tee and shirt, looks away from the lens. Curiously Mia frames his image in an oval-shaped inner frame.

She relates a new element in these portraits—a brick cottage in the background. One may think of the crafty techniques in scrapbooks but her handling is subtle and refined, almost blending with the painted surfaces. It may be a neutral one of the very personal roots of these images.

We actually see the subjects Alfonso—through his own eyes as well as through the eyes of his great-grandaughter, three generations later. These portraits are not merely copies from existing photographs but are Mia's personal perspectives of a beloved ancestor.

Mia trained for 12 years in the Art Students' League in New York. There she earned three certificates for completing full programs in painting, printmaking and sculpture, each four years long. She left short semesters in the league's informal teaching approach—"where a beginner paints beside advanced colleagues."

Her journey in art school developed a keen mastery for human subjects and their distinct personalities. The head drawings and nude paintings on exhibit show Mia's talent to capture individual characters.

The few graphite drawings are especially engaging even with minimal details. They are not simply facial and anatomical studies. She infuses in them a sense of mood and a sense of place.

Lessons from past

Mia sometimes re-value lessons learned from the past. In this exhibit, she incorporates ideas and techniques of European artists. In her "Self-portrait as Thirty-six," she employs the reflected image on a mirror to create an illusion of three-dimensional space, reminiscent of elements in the works of Jan van Eyck and Diego Velazquez. Unlike her earlier self-portraits, she centers candid attention on her image as an artist by showing herself in canvas-and-directly gazing at us. She depicts her earthen palette, also an artifact, in a similar fashion, arranging the colors with equal care as hanging and cropped in the background.

Mia also pays tribute to Dutch and Flemish masters known for their tradition of still life painting in the 17th century. Popular among patrons collectors of these paintings were ideal for domestic spaces. They were carefully composed to look ordinary—a disheveled fabric covering the cloth or draping diagonally from the wall, a jar or bottle lying diagonally on the table, fruits scattered or dangling at the edge.

Her still-life paintings are autobiographical. She is personal enough to invite us to ask what connections can be made. It amazes the importance of the everyday and the ordinary. Objects in each canvas were carefully chosen and composed. They may seem somewhat cluttered but they are her "precious encumbrance" that represent a phase in the artist's life, a season of the year, or a time of day. A pair of red shoes and a row of summer hats introduced to us her 4-year-old daughter Luca. The choice of flowers may refer to different times of the year spent in her studios in New Rochelle in Manila.

Traditionally, still life were viewed in Northern Europe then as symbols of material wealth. For Mia, however, it is more of a wealth of blessings. In this as a subject matter is also taken as a memento mori. It reminds us of our mortality and of time fleeting away. And she brings us back to the idea of carpe diem. Making the most of the opportunities. Mia captures what is before her—a life blessed with family, a career and a past that has connected with her present.

Mia (1 Nathan's works are on view until Jan. 22 at Alliance Française de Manille Triad Gallery, 104 Nicanor Garcia St. (formerly Bayani), Bel Air II, Makati City. Call 8927941 or 8925580 (Olivia Domingo-Ruel Perez) or 0917.496 1139 (Elaine Barbosa) or visit visitorhouse.com.

The author is assistant professor at the Department of Art Studies, College of Arts and Letters, UP Diliman.

Beauty queens visit Gamaba collection at Tesoro's

IT WAS A CRASH COURSE ON Philippine indigenous arts and crafts when the newly crowned Miss Earth 2006 (40 Teresita Borromeo) and 40 other countries visited Tesoro's Makiti recently to view the Grand Gamaba Collection at Tesoro's (Lumbini Collection). Among the beauties were the runners-up: Miss Earth-Fire Maureen Paglia Martinez of Venezuela, Miss Earth-Air Amarah Dalal of India, Miss Earth-Water Catherine Untalan of the Philippines and Sandra Francys Rodriguez of Poland.

UP professor Serena Rosaria headed the session about Gamaba and the collection. The Grand as Manilakbo ng Bayan or National Living Treasures Award is the ultimate honor in the realm of indigenous arts conferred by the Philippine government through the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA). The Gamaba Committee is the NCCA body that searches the entire archipelago to bring recognition to a member of a local community who best exemplifies that group's highest achievement in a unique and native art form.

MASTER under Lydia Navarro takes Miss Earth's measurement for her custom-made gown.

ADMIRING the Child Jesus image of embossed and hand-silver by National Living Treasures awardee Edwardo Mutuc of Pampanga.

artists.

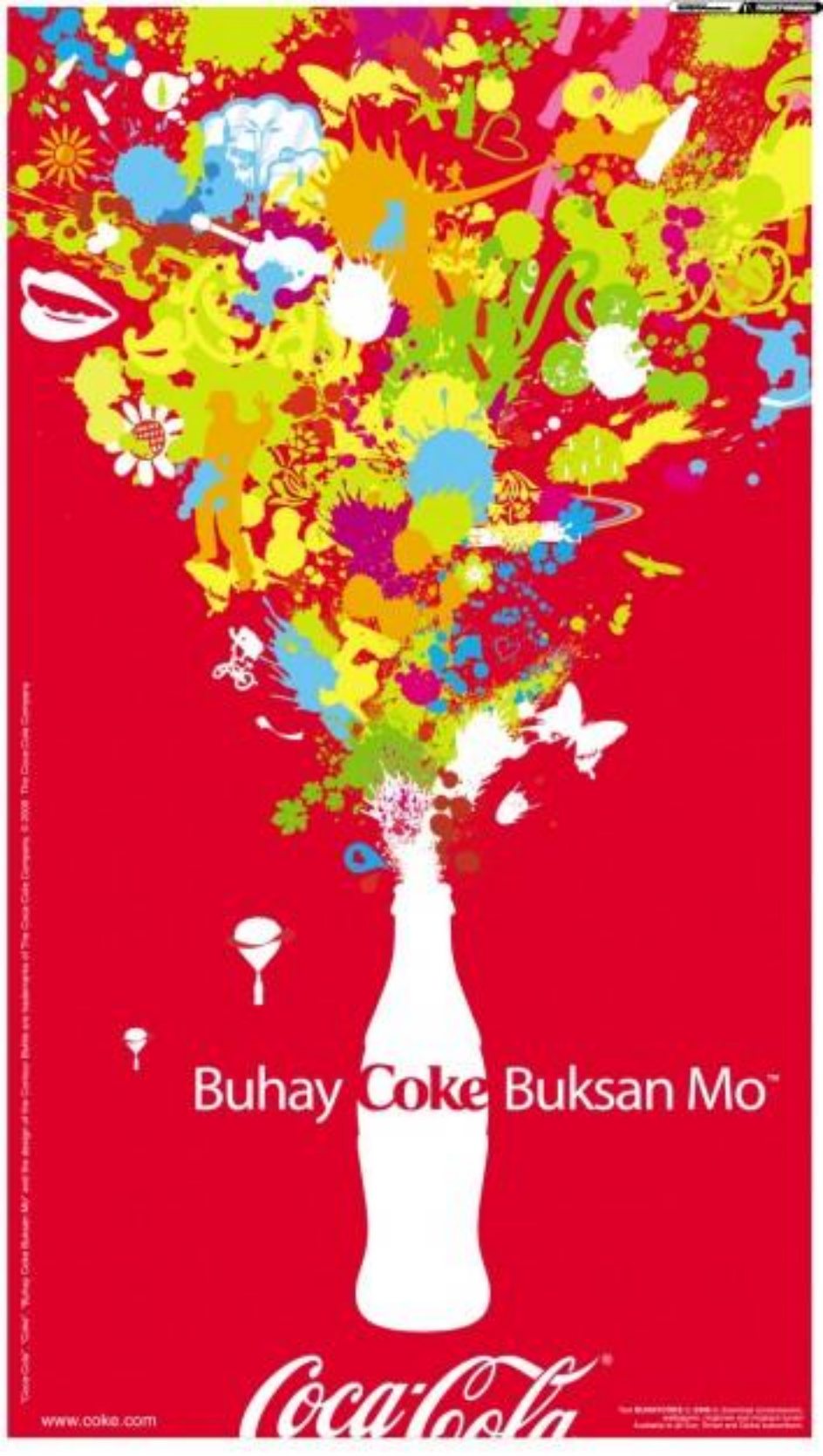
In collaboration with Tesoro's, the pioneer in Philippine handicrafts, the NCCA and the Gamaba Committee sponsored the creation of an exhibit highlighting the works of the 11 National Living Awardees. In this indigenous arts and creative

THE MOTHERS OF PEARL products of Tesoro's draw admiration from the beauties.

TESORO'S embroidered chiffon caps "dresses get the ladies" approval.

MULTICOLORED out of Filipiana Appl

"DRAWING with Kathy"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LIFESTYLE

Tenor Carreras upstages New Year's Eve fireworks in Taipei

The newly married Spanish tenor led the countdown to 2007

SPANISH tenor Jose Carreras (center), visits Taipei 101, the tallest building in the world, with his wife, right.

By Nancy T. Lu, Contributor

WHILE MOST YOUNG PEOPLE JAMMED THE COMMERCIAL area near Taipei 101, the tallest building in the world, to catch the spectacular once-a-year fireworks on New Year's Eve, a more mature crowd made up mainly of lovers of classical music, including top corporate executives from the financial and banking sector, joined world class tenor Jose Carreras as a memorable New Year's Eve countdown at the Taipei Arena on Dec. 31.

This was not the first time for Carreras to be working on the last day of the year. As he put it, "I have done it many times on New Year's Eve but not on Christmas Eve."

The Barcelona-born song artist for the operatic occasion—building a glass of wine—broke into a drinking song for a duet from Verdi's "La Traviata" titled "Brindisi" as the stroke of midnight. Soprano Giorgia Fumanti joined him in the hearty singing.

As a Spaniard, Carreras described how his countrymen usually celebrate the arrival of the New Year: "New Year's Eve dinner is from 9 p.m. to midnight. With every stroke of the clock during the countdown, you pop a grape into the mouth."

Darting laser beam

Carreras, wearing a tuxedo, courted his listeners as he sang his heart out at the Taipei exercise, which started later than usual at 10 p.m. The program, which also featured the Evergreen Symphony Orchestra, the National Experimental Chorus and the Taoluna Elementary School Chorus, was interrupted to make way for the dramatic countdown.

The portion, which led to the climax, started with Carreras performing "White Christmas," singing with lyrics were Fumanti and the Taoluna Elementary School Chorus. The children's angelic voices when broke into "Hark Angelicos." The orchestra played a special arrangement of Christmas carols as the excitement built up. The countdown proceeded with darting laser beam indicating the seconds left of the old year.

Then "Happy New Year" was flashed on the stage. At that precise moment, 23007 balloons were released. Confetti, too, rained on the spectators. The crowd tried to burst the balloons by stepping on them, creating what sounded like firecrackers.

The program featuring Carreras, one of the Three Tenors, opened on New Year's Eve with Strauss' "Die Fledermaus" Overture. Then Carreras began vocalizing in his powerful but carressing voice the Christmas carol, "Adeste Fideles." He later sang more Christmas carols like "O Holy Night," "The Drummer Boy" and "I'll Be Home for Christmas."

Carreras' repertoire also included Johann's "Mille Chevaux" as sung by Strauss's "Pergola," and Legnavi's "Es necesit dalle Stelle." Among the traditional selections were "O Cant dels Ocells," "La Virgen lava pañales" and "Lalaijo Jesusito, Duerme a Bambino."

Carreras, who arrived in Taipei with his wife whom he wed only last summer, turned 60 last Dec. 5. Of his future, he said, "New recordings are planned. And I would like to go on singing in concerts for a few more years."

He also cited a personal interest in touring through one plan: "As my roots are in the opera and as Cher sings, I am going to sing in an opera production with a great tenor—Eugen D'Albert's 'Tiefland.' The opera is based on a Catalan play titled 'Terra baixa' by Angel Guimera. As a kid, I used to watch the play. The opera has a demanding role for a tenor."

Carreras will likewise continue to work on a project close to his heart and that is to help leukemia victims through his foundation.

"I also want to spend time with my family and my wife," he said. "I want to have a personal life besides my career."

After his unforgettable reign with his thousands of Taipei fans, Carreras flew to Hong Kong for more concerts.

Cellist makes his mark; 'After Aida' opens

By Pablo A. Tariman, Contributor

TUESDAY NIGHT LAST WEEK, CELLIST Victor Michael Coo made a landmark recital **unheard of in Manila's concert scene**: as he was an entire program to unaccompanied cello repertoire.

Being a solo unaccompanied recital was tough enough but doing contemporary works [from Matthews's Desert Call to Bodily's Sonata Op. 8] alongside Bach's Suite No. 3 in C Major was indeed too daunting to contemplate.

But then, of course, it helped that Coo envisioned the results he was playing.

At the end of the mind-boggling 90 minutes Bodily Sonata Op. 8, a thoroughly ecstatic audience rose to their feet to give the cellist a rousing standing ovation.

In my book, no Filipino cellist living or dead could come close to that performance. Someone mentioned that the equally gifted Chino Bolipata, who was admired by no less than Rubi Rubi, played a movement of Cha Kodaly sonata years ago.

The first time Coo tried the unaccompanied program was when he was finishing his masters degree in Maryland, USA, and it was well received.

That prompted him to continue doing unaccompanied recitals. But the first time, he admits, was nerve-wracking as he had the whole stage to himself and had no support usually given by the pianist.

The danger of doing solo pieces is that a recitalist may find it too convenient to feel too free with the work as the pianist. Coo said. "Balance of the two would be the ideal preparation."

A curious piece in the program was Dahl Wardson's "Desert Call," which has roots in the Middle East sounds. Wardson and Coo were in Stockholm, Sweden, a few years back and the Filipino cellist got to hear the piece as played by another cellist. In one hastily concert in New York, the cellist was asked if he was interested in working on the piece "Desert Call." That started his collaboration with Wardson.

"We cannot stay in the confines of standard repertoire," he said. "Having a challenge on a new piece and collaborating

VICTOR Michael Coo

GARFIELD — By Jim Davis

A. LIPIN — By Jon Aberin

BABY BLUES — By Jerry Scott

PUGAD BABOY — By Pol Junior

BUTTS — By Patrick McDonnell

SEVERINOTS — By Elizabeth Chionglo

ATOMO AND WEBBY — By Lisa Garcellano

DIVINE COMEDY — By Steven Rabalona

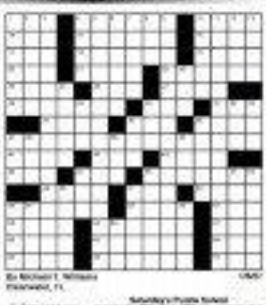
KIKO MACHINE — By Hanz Aberin

MANONGSENG — By Jonas Tijoo

TULDOK — By Paulino Tatun Palmiano Jr.

SEN — By Daniel Shelton

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Michael T. Williams
Manhattan, Ks.

Yesterday's Puzzle Solved

ACROSS
1 Alpha or beta
6 Abnormal
10 Toe the line
14 Singers' meetings
15 Rants or blusters
16 Starvation's evidence
17 Treat without penalty
18 Prosecutor
19 Stellar source
20 Kind of drink
21 Color lover
22 Reverence
24 Troll
26 Tic-tac-toe win
27 Ex-Babe Can Cannonball
29 Test mark
30 PIPE part
31 Chef Sam Breadwinner
34 Half the Mississippi
35 Sensuous
38 Modest walk
39 Bridge bidder
41 First name of jazz
43 Cow's call
44 Bank loans
45 Chess piece
46 "Oh, God!"
49 "Sin of Harold"
51 Pitcher of lore
52 Chat one-liner today
53 Hearthland
55 Nickel and dime
56 Ballet or tennis
57 Mafia
58 Bank job
59 Cash
60 19th-century queens
61 Tax payer
64 Tax grab
65 Small spring
66 Be present at
67 Rules of routine

DOWN
1 Crockett's gunsmoke
2 Nonsensical
3 Homesickness of Roman consort
4 Tan Cassio
5 Opera "Tancredi" role
6 Three Rivers
7 Warning in Juarez
8 Flower garden
9 Three Rivers
10 Astrologer Sidney
11 Lab rooms
12 Lennon's son-in-law
13 Cry for attention
21 Opposite of health
23 It released out
25 Japanese drama
28 Hamster dish
30 Lovers-Parents daughter
32 Sigh
33 Municipal gp.
36 Start of a quote?
37 Grade point
38 Govt. finance gp.
40 Yield a campaign
42 Kimp Cole
47 Book's head
48 Semiotic
51 Founder
49 Rich colors
50 World Often
51 Persian or Omar
54 B.C. poet
55 Chat / talk inn.
57 Ms. Peron
58 Ruins
62 Abyss

HOROSCOPE

THE BORN TODAY: You're known about whatever you do. It's common, but unusually attractive to others. Influential people are drawn to you. Accomplishments come easily to you. Unconventional and nonconformist actions. You always do your homework before any important event. This helps to give you a feeling of confidence in the role played, some confusion of their self-character will exist in order to create more than something new to write.

Birthdate is: Daniel Boone, singer; Stephen Hawking, physicist; Boris Yeltsin, artist

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): You have the energy to do almost anything at work done today. Make this most of this time. Use study or explore what you might normally consider to be difficult subjects. It's a good day to make travel plans or visit.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): You have the time to tackle a lot of things not new details. Don't let them overwhelm you. You have time, both, home and other items.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): You can work very well in groups today. People will be grateful that you're doing more than your fair share. You just work smooth.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): You have excellent day at work. It's a good time to do work where you have to keep dragging away. Instead today, you have lots of patience and motivation to finish your task.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): You won't mind working with children today. You are very patient, especially when it comes to teaching someone something.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): This is an excellent day to meet someone new or have lunch with friends. Nothing will stand you today. You just want to get the job done.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Choose your activities today. Concentration and attention to detail. Even if it's boring work, you'll do it fairly. Thoroughness as well make the most of this opportunity.)

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): This is a good day to sit up on your social contacts and network you own and what you have. You're very content about your financial situation.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): What ever you do today you will feel inspired. "How useful is this?" You're connected with practical matters, and you're not attentive to difficult, complicated work.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): This is an excellent day to do boring research. You will have an eye for detail, regular pace. No matter how difficult your task, you will persevere to it.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Join forces with others today to accomplish what you want. Your ideas will be received at your persuasive and logical manner.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Your are very creative in doing work of others willing to do. The homework involved is always to attain the results you want in the future.

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku — by Dave Green

	6			5			9	
3	4						8	5
			8	2	4			
		4		1		5		
9		5	3	4	2	1		6
		6		8		3		
			2	7	9			
2	9						5	4
	7			3			1	

Difficulty Level ★

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Answer to previous puzzle

9	4	5	6	3	2	1	8	7
3	8	6	7	1	4	5	2	9
2	7	1	9	5	8	3	6	4
6	3	8	2	7	1	4	9	5
4	1	9	8	6	5	7	3	2
5	2	7	4	9	3	6	1	8
1	9	4	5	8	6	2	7	3
8	6	2	3	4	7	9	5	1
7	5	3	1	2	9	8	4	6

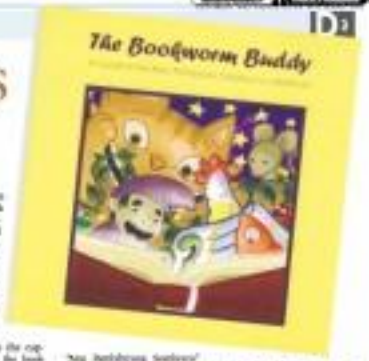
HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and programs at www.sudoku.com

Recommended reads for the New Year

Best books for kids

By Nimi Bas, Rainiere Cruz
Contributor

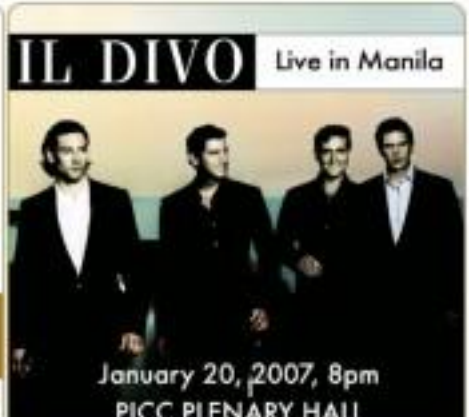


Best-selling trilogy is written by teenager

CHRISTOPHER Paolini, "Eragon" author

Cellist makes his mark; 'After Aida' opens

RACHELLE Garcellano



Rediscovering Wilfrido Ma. Guerrero, playwright

WILFRIDO Ma. Guerrero

By Tony S. Esperas
Contributor

WILFRIDO MA. GUERRERO's one a handful plays were never considered part of the Gantimpala Theater season. He writes in English and GTP is an avowed purchaser of plays in Filipino, or at least translations. In addition, the bulk of our productions are cleverly curriculum-oriented—titles that are discussed in the classroom. Add to that, we initially produced playwriting winners that were in the annual CCP Literary Contest, and most of those plays were written in Filipino.

But then, the English teachers and students complained! They were losing left and right in the all-important exposure of their English students to productions in English! Why should the Filipino department get all the field trips and the exposure to playwrighting?

That's why we pulled together the dramaturges of "The Sacrifice" doubled with "Reve Sacrée in Studio." both in English, and the students and teachers loved it. And as we have the formula of an English twin bill production, one set tests and also delivers!

Gantimpala Theater mounts a twinbill production of the pioneering Pinoy dramatist's one-act plays, 'Forever' and 'Call Me Flory'

WILMA Doroon, Kimberly Diaz and Monica Llamas in "Call Me Flory"

We continuously search for English plays by Filipino writers. In the process, we've found out that the majority of these writers were National Artists, so we're exploring the idea of concentrating on the works of National Artists. This way, we get to know the output that made them deserving of the National Artist title in the first place, and on rare offer our student audience the chance to emulate their betters and, more important, their works.

Another factor that made us stage English plays by Filipino writers is the generic accused "globalization" and the requirement for having English literate Filipinos, by "call center." Now, who would ever think that the call center phenomenon would compel us to rush to Wilfrido Ma. Guerrero plays, read them and study them seriously?

Highly recommended

The play "Forever" came highly recommended. The lead female character Maria Teresa—strong-willed and unwilling to compromise—is a women's lib(er)'s delight! Although the language is a bit archaic and the scene melodramatic, Guerrero wrote with an allowance of interjections, and that is a significant factor.

It is rare enough to have screaming hands, lawsuits of taste to flood the scene and a slapping scene here and there, but on the other hand it can also work as a "quiet little play" that stays in your guts—the pain of wanting to forget, but somehow the knife grates at your brain and keeps reminding you of the pain that was unbearable 10 years ago.

You have suffered long. Why lose the dignity and poise you've had so long for 15 years in the few minutes that this man offers reconciliation?

Nicolet Gamalog (Teresa) and Monica Llamas (Maria Teresa) play the yin and yang protagonists with conviction. They reach their emotional peak in a monologue-cum-duet where they vent their anguish and reservations on each other.

Kimberly Diaz (Consuelo) is the sexiest sister-in-law while Adam Delima (a Gelo-wannabe with Richard King Guerrero as Ferdie) and Vincent Reyes Kalpers (Bill) Parjan alternating as Oscar) made their presence with crisp dialogue.

"Call Me Flory" was a more difficult choice. At first reading, it felt unfinished and too skeletal, but it had promises of a very funny play. We decided to add a few more characters and introduce a few new scenes. In this play, we meet political and social climbers raising funds for the poor, but all in the name of the First Lady of the land. This "Pin-set plot" (Vivian Blanca's term by otherwise devoid folks. In their indefinable desire to get in the good graces of the powers-that-be, they are willing and ready to step on anybody's toes.

Because the characters involved are obsessed with their looks and their social standing, are thought of adding a fashion designer. And if a designer is around, can the boys be far behind? Within the minute scenes, Wilma Doroon actually has role with her special kind of comedy (Lolibum says "Bejeus, the scenes are flowing"). The women GTP freaks playing the "Boy Toys" are Jude Jaymes and Trey de Dalmas.

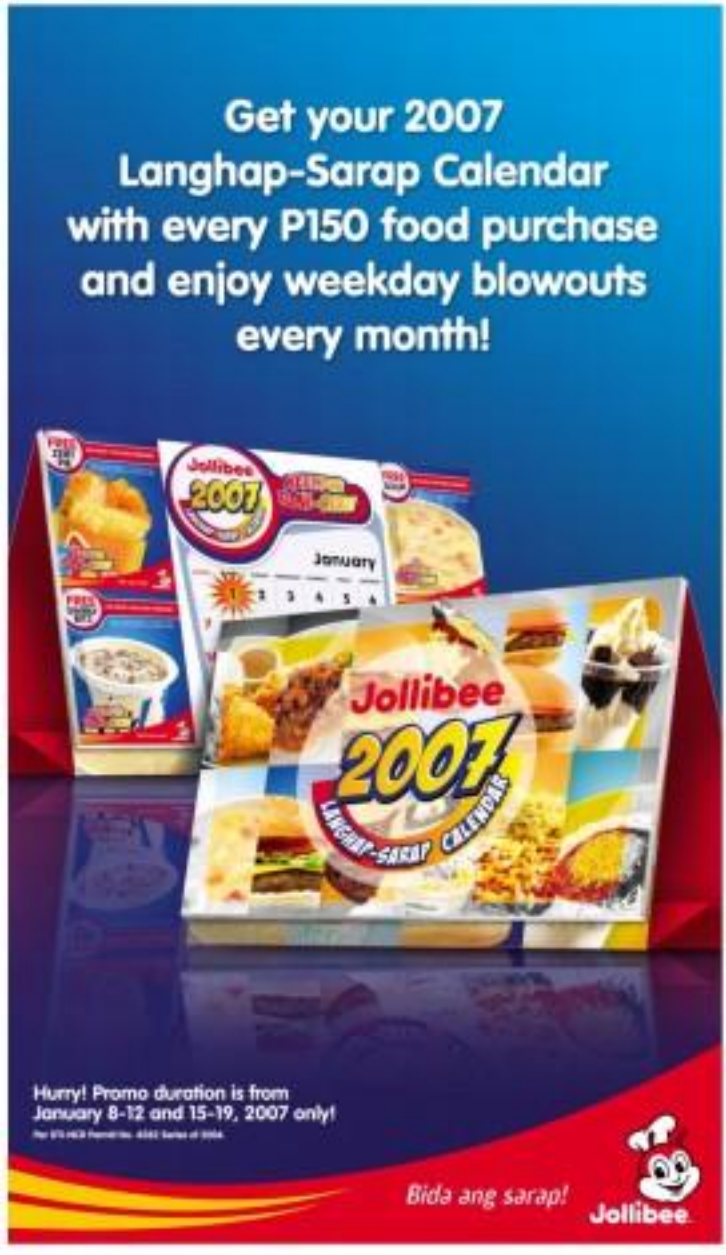
We've added ballroom dancing and are trusting that we are all too familiar with to local TV situation—the fanfares and the hair-puffing and the screaming of routines and Debbig all over the set!

Giving their special assists to teachers are J. Dennis Teodosio for additional dialogue and characters; Joey Romero for light design; Rosbah Tallo for set design; and Albert Figueroa for costume design.

I sincerely hope that Wilfrido Ma. Guerrero does not turn in his grave with this staging. After all, we have discovered him, once again, and his works are proving to be ready of the quality of great times—timeless entertainment and "call center" not withstanding!

"Forever"/"Call Me Flory" performances start with matinee tours Jan. 12 (La Union), Jan. 19 (Dolores) and Jan. 20 (Calasiao, ati, Manila shows are slated Jan. 26-29 (10 a.m./2 p.m.) and Feb. 2-4 (10 a.m./2 p.m.) at the AFP Camp Aguinaldo Theater (in Quezon City).

For tickets and booking information, call 8890743/8902802; for matinee tours sponsorship, call 5266065/5265068.



ENTERTAINMENT

Edcel Beverly O. Valverde

BATANG Fernando and his wife, Mayor Marides Fernando of Marikina, award cash prize to "Batang" producer Orly Ilacad for 2005 film Ina Kau Kan Manok.

'Hollywood will benefit'

Bayani Fernando says cooperation, not abolition, is the answer to MMFF problems

By Rowena Dizon Dejo Jr.

EVERY YEAR THERE ARE CONtroversies and, every year, there's a move to abolish the MMFF," observes Bayani Fernando, chair of the Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA), which spearheads the Metro Manila Film Festival (MMFF).

"If these protesters really want to abolish the film fest, they should go to Congress so they can change the law. But I don't think they understand the implications of their proposal," Fernando tells Inquirer Entertainment in a phone interview.

He stands that local governments with LGUs (cities) benefit the most if the MMFF is abolished. "LGUs will only be too happy to get back the entertainment taxes that are supposed to go to the industry."

He also points out that Hollywood studios will also welcome the idea of getting back the film fest's Dec. 25 to Jan. 7 play dates—technically a very lucrative two-week period in terms of gross sales.

"If the MMFF is abolished, Filipinos will get to watch something like Hollywood movies during the holidays," he insists. "I don't know if these protesters are actually speaking on behalf of the movie industry."

'Very emotional'

He also comments on the letter sent to him by Melvin M. Sarsosa, the Cinema executive producer, protesting the loss of his company's entry "Kasal, Kasali, Kasalo" in the Best Picture race.

"It was a very emotional letter," he says. "I can't do anything about that. I know how painful it is to lose."

He insists, however, that the ensuing controversy has helped the box-office performance of all MMFF entries, including "Kasal." "It's now notice that every time Mr. Sarsosa gets interviewed [on TV], the box-office performance of 'Kasal' improves! Show biz drama at its best."

As of Jan. 6, "Enteng Kabisote" still led with P132,450,000. "Kasal" was a close second with P107,406,727. "Shake, Rattle & Roll 8" was a distant third with P40,557,732.

Fernando predicts that the MMFF sees an increase, without-counted over P400 million, by the end of its run (yesterday). "Although it's still P100 million short of our target of P500 million, it's higher compared to last year's earnings of P392 million."

Challenge

Justice' letter ended with a challenge to the MMFF executive committee: "Explain the definition and decision-making [process]... [and] evenly observed dubious decision and inconsistencies."

"We always need to review this year's results. But, I have promised, we have to give them suggestions for next year's festival," Fernando explains.

He reiterates that the MMFF sponsors a "forum for industry stakeholders... every year—in which we discuss possible improvements to the rules and processes governing the festival... Unfortunately, I don't see the protesters at these meetings."

He says that the MMFF will hold the annual industry forum in February. "I have no dissenting award chairs. What's important is for industry stakeholders, including the producers, to attend this year's meeting so that we can fine-tune the rules."

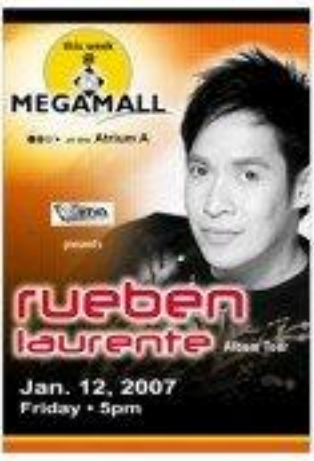
DID YOU KNOW...

LOS ANGELES—The Screen Actors Guild has announced nominations for this year's awards.

The SAG awards, to be given Feb. 25, are a key indicator ahead of next month's Academy Awards (Oscars).

Since the SAG awards were first presented in 1995, 53 percent of the actor Oscar prize as well as Oscars, overall, paired with 28 SAG wins in Globe winners in the same year.

But last year, the Golden Globes predicted all four of the Oscars' acting winners—the SAG awards, three. The Oscars will be handed out Feb. 25. AFP



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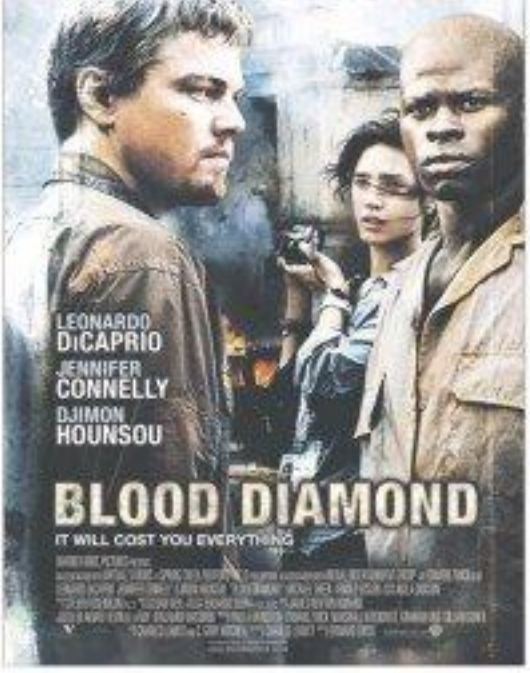

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CASH sa Pelikula DOBLE sa SM Cinema

From hit movies to 'cinenovelas'

By Nesi Valera

GMA 7 HAS ACQUIRED THE RIGHTS to serialize its television first block-busters movies lean Yes Willem.

The movies—"Saan Darating Ang Umaga?" "Dapat Ka Bang Mahalin," "Dimasalang Ba," "Kung Hindi Mo Ako Mahal," and "Kailan Sumapit Ang Bukas"—will reach the viewers up into a series under the "cinenovela" genre, according to Wilma Galvante, GMA 7 senior vice president for entertainment.

Six months max

Each series will run for a maximum of 26 weeks, she added.

"We started remaking classics with 'Encantadia,' and its success is a ticket for our original set to look at the classics," Galvante said.

"Dapat" has had several remakes in a movie. After "Darna," VIVA 7 produced as a series "Captain Barbell," another blast from the classic.

Galvante noted that GMA 7's production of such classic movies had given the formula greater longevity and life.

They were even better produced than the original, she claimed. And, unlike a movie, with a running time of only 90 minutes, a TV series can gladly, accounting for the "emotional" of the interest with the audience.

Modern dimension

"In a series, we can stretch the story to include more subplots, more characters, more twists and turns," Galvante explained. "But we always give it a modern dimension to be in tune with the times."

Among the "Five movies, Galvante is also looking on the Filipino's affinity for the audience.

"Sinukuban Ako" and "Gusto Kitang Maging Minahal" both starred Vilma Santos, and were sometimes late in the 1980s.

"Dapat Ka Bang Mahalin" reunited Sharon Cuneta and Gabby Concepcion and refined their credibility early on stage and its eventual collapse.

"Kung Hindi Mo Ako Mahal" showcased Rikki Nieto and going through all the travails of a young woman, who had to deal with a scheming stepfather (Eddie Garcia) out to dispossess of her inheritance.

"Saan Darating Ang Umaga?" which starred Marisol Jackson, is a family drama that involved several conflicts created by rebellious teenage.

Keep 'em relevant

Galvante said the TV remakes will remain true to the stories' plots.

"In all our remakes, we have never violated the basic plot of the stories," Galvante said. "Even if we add more characters, we still remain faithful to the story. That's why we have undertaken a good working relationship with the authors."

The new characters are added to expand the story and give it a bigger dimension. What the audience appreciates."

"We always throw something new," Galvante said. "Otherwise, nawa (the) repeat factor sets in. So we have to keep the viewers riveted with the story. It's up to our writers to embellish the story."

This early, GMA 7 has shown that it has mastered the "cinenovela" genre.

"Stukbilang," a classic komiks novel by Carlos J. Caparas, which was made into a movie starring Boots Anson in the 1980s, is one of the network's highest-rating prime time series.

Galvante's "Stukbilang" remakes run his. "I'm hooked on it," she admitted. "It has all the classic ingredients of a soap."

'Barbell's' last leg

"Captain Barbell," starring Richard Gutierrez, is another example of the success factor of the genre. Now in its last leg, the series is still soaring high in the ratings. It will end on Jan. 21, and will be replaced by the Rubio Pujillo-Angel Locsin-Iza Calzado-starrer series, "Sang'gre."

Galvante said the "cinenovela" will cost GMA 7's young stars in their roles, but the lineups have yet to be finalized.

"We still have not reached the casting stage," she said. "But definitely, we will be tapping our talents."

She noted, however, that veteran actors offer strong support to the young stars.

"It's still a mixture of the old and the new," Galvante said. "We don't see any difference to cast a veteran. It will move it and ..."

Aside from the Five movies, GMA 7 has also bought the rights to "Rosalinda Mao" from Canary Films and Ventures, who started in the movie distributorship the 2004 Metro Manila Film Festival.

Roundup

Public service show

Medical concerns are addressed on a new weekly television show titled "Kilalaking Doktor" hosted by Dra. Willa Ordoñez Ong.

The public service program, which premiered Jan. 6 on DWIN-4, features a young medical whizkid that answers several depressed areas to look after the health needs of the poor.

It airs Saturdays, 10:30 a.m.

All Star K!' anniversary

"All Star K!" is celebrating anniversary celebration continues as the husband-duo is on for the P1 million jackpot in the Jan. 13 episode.

On Jan. 21, there will be a battle of the Champions featuring former champions, Alyson Alano, Jessa Jean Bacolcolo, Melissa Dizon, Art Pangan, Mia of Image and Isabel of Oh. El Bimo, and Joe Gladys Guevara and Jhoanne.

The show airs Sunday night after "Mel & Joey" on GMA 7.

Korean series

GMA 7 airs "Samsung Blend's 2006 Hit. 1 TV series, replacing "A Story Life" on its prime time block.

The period drama is based on the life of a real Korean hero. Among

"[illegible]"

MTRCB PG-13

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Dermont Mulroney
(star of "My Best Friend's Wedding" & "The Wedding Date")

Amanda Peet
(star of "A Lot Like Love")

Griffin & Phoenix

De Niro, Soderbergh movies

BERLIN—Nine movies from Robert De Niro and Steven Soderbergh are among the first chosen for the competition at the 57th year's Berlin International Film Festival, organizers said Thursday.

The festival, which runs from Feb. 8 to 18, will feature De Niro's second outing as a director—"The Good Shepherd," a tale about the earliest days of the CIA and a fictionalized agent, played by Matt Damon. De Niro directed "A Bronx Tale" in 1993.

Soderbergh's "The Good Germans" stars George Clooney as an American journalist forced into a romance during the early years of World War II Berlin. AP

(MARLON GRANDE)

Brando lawsuit

LOS ANGELES—A lawsuit filed against the estate of Marlon Brando has settled a lawsuit with executors of the late actor's estate over claims the star cheated out of or a home bought for his by Dia Hollywood idol, her lawyer said Wednesday.

Angela Borkin claimed in a lawsuit filed last year that executors of Brando's estate had changed the actor's will shortly before his death in 2004 and evicted her from a house he had promised to leave to her.

According to papers filed in a related case in Los Angeles on Dec. 22, Borkin agreed to settle all the claims in exchange for $120,000.

Borkin worked for Brando for nine years from February 1995 until his death, two-and-a-half years

IL DIVO

QUINCY JONES

Rare Quincy footage in jazz series on DVD

SPIN CITY

NEW YORK—THE MEMORIES COME FLOODING back when Quincy Jones watches the DVD of himself as a young man clowning his "shuck" jazz big band that toured around Europe in 1960 after moved in Paris found the musical they were performing in done.

"Quincy Jones—Live in '60" is one of nine DVDs in the recently released "Jazz Icons" series (featuring long-lost concert and studio film footage from the 1950s through the 1970s of such influential jazz artists as Ella Fitzgerald, Louis Armstrong, Dizzy Gillespie, Thelonious Monk and Chet Baker.

The films were uncovered in the vaults of TV studios and nearly all of the material is being released officially for the first time.

The DVD showcases Jones' tight ensemble arrangements and colorful orchestrations, including pseudo-Bach duets on "Evidence Jumps In," Indian-flavored "Pretty" horn solo on "Everybody's Blues," and Magnificent and muted trumpet backgrounds on the ballad "The Gypsy" featuring alto saxophonist Phil Woods. AP

Il Divo returns

Il Divo, the quartet that brought opera into the mainstream, has released their third album "Siempre," a mixture of classic and new songs.

The album, under Sony BMG Music Entertainment, includes the songs "Regresa" by Willie Colón, "Caruso," "Somewhere," "Without You," "You Raise Me Up," "Come Primavera," "Un Angelo (Que Te Das La Vida Entre Tus Ojos Bonita Loved A Woman)," "La Vida Es Incierta" and "Una Rosita."

VIOPAL MEMO POPCORN

Manila Sound

"The Best of Manila Sound: Hopia, Mani, Popcorn" under Viva Records features today's bands and artists interpreting classic Manila Sound hits.

Among the songs in the album are "Da Touch" (Rockstarr); "Inggerosal Me" (Hyperactive); "Kinagat Magdamag" (Kapatid); "Kako Magisi Ito Ang Bukas Mo" (Groupie); "Fuck, Baby, Rock" (Kiko); "Bilis ka 'Di" (Up Dharma Down); "Kanggaluan" (Orchestra); "Kinsha (Kanagka" (Eraserheads Studio); "Tao" (BBC); "Napakasa" (Radioactive Sago Project); "Alay Ko Sayo-sayo" (Sound); "Kanday" (Juan The Child); and "Ti, Ako Ito Yi" (Rivermaya).

Concert video

"Eraserhead's Final The Concert," staged by MTV music channel, has been released on video—DVD and VCD formats—by Universal Records.

The live performances features the rock trio singing 4PM, Hiling Sweetie's mom—Parokya ni Edgar Bandanera, Imago, Sud Sudnod, Yeng Constantino, Sandwich, Imprint, Urbandemic, Imago, Shamrock, Barbie Almalbis, Rocksteddy, Top Suzara, Bloodsucker, Brigada and Rakista.

The "Eraserhead Music" album is available on a standard two-CD set.

SPONGECOLA

Rock Awards winners

Universal Records talents won 10 out of the 14 trophies given the recent 021 Wild 107 Rock Awards.

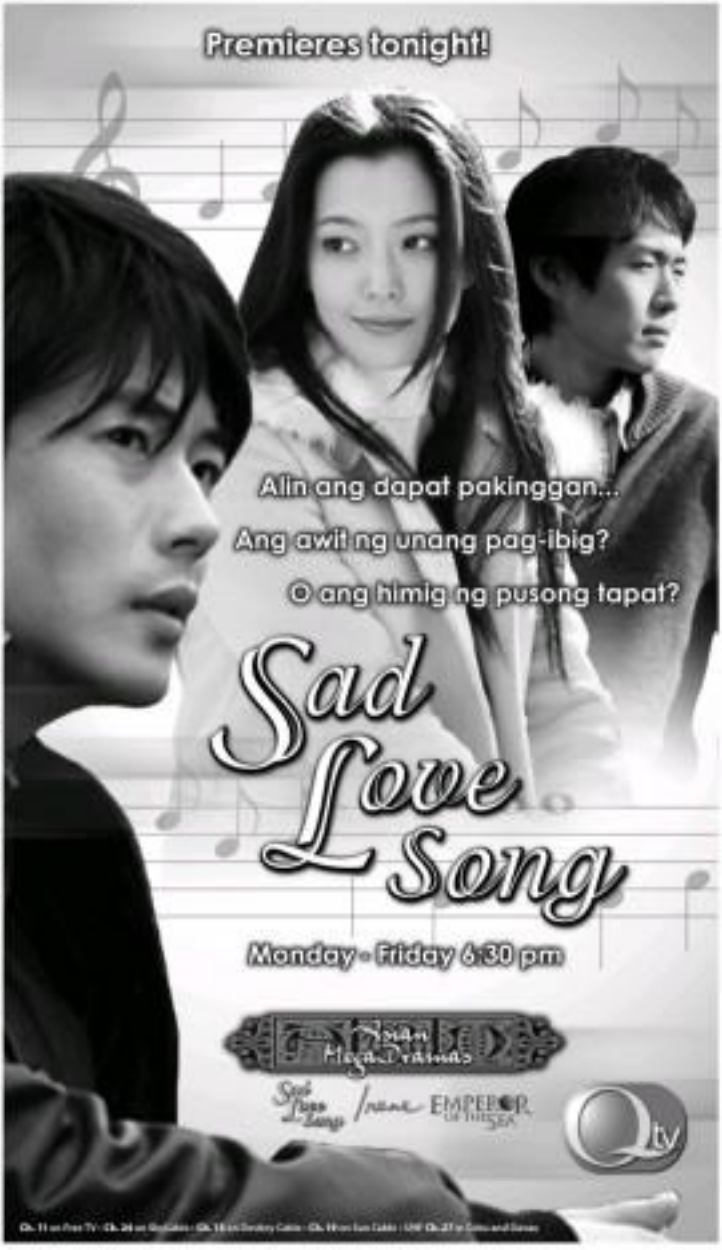
The winners' circle includes: Eraserheads, Artist/Band of the Year award; Best Live act; Song of the Year ("Pinoy") and Listeners' Choice Award; Inducement; Album of the Year ("Rivermine Show"); Producer of the Year (Ramon Marasigan, Buddy Zabala for "Moonshine Show"); Musicians of the Year (Gary Richardson) and the Rising Star Award.

Winner of the Year

'Crystal Voice'

Mary Mitchell, The Crystal Voice of Isaac

PAMBI PALLES



Liberator of oppressed televiewers

POLICE REPORT THAT LARA MORENA, 30-year-how beauty say use the search—snapped charges with boyfriend Anthony Cruz after they move to Mesa, Ariz., breaking and between knows what role in the course of a scuffle.

The scuffle allegedly took place last week in the actress's Legazpi Village condominium in Makati.

As we write, on a Saturday, they are being interviewed on radio and TV, trading accusations, hitting reporters and cameramen, and generally—the fists were flying.

Thank goodness for the sticker, liberator of oppressed viewers! With a report from Rona V. Quimzon

Rufa Mae pregnant?

We may never know how the talk started. But right this minute, Rufa Mae Quinto is on TV as well, saying in so many words that she's not pregnant, as rumored, by her friend Ai Ai de las Alas. This is being interviewed, live, and he says he loves her really and truly.

When does Rufa Mae have the interviewer time? Or answer she says just as much for Kilt, she says, as much as that they're having a concert together soon.

Uh, where did that rumor come?

RUFA MAE QUINTO

ELIZABETH HURLEY

Pink silk sari

MUMBAI—British model and actress Elizabeth Hurley will marry a [illegible] Indian businessman Arun Nayar, which is set for early March, a newspaper said on Friday.

Hurley, the former lover of Hollywood actor Hugh Grant, had said in August that she would marry Nayar, a [illegible] Indian businessman, "very soon" and that she was also thinking of having a concert together soon.

The 40-year-old "Bedazzled" star could marry at the Bombay Hotel [illegible] on Ghoorchandan house. The Times of India newspaper said without revealing the source of its information.

"Arun and Hurley are said to have their reservation on the Jodhpur palace in Rajasthan for their honeymoon wedding," the newspaper said without [illegible] the wedding Indian dessert state known for its opulent palaces. Reuters

Heavenly Angelina

PALMDALE, North Carolina—A painting of actress Angelina Jolie as the Virgin Mary [illegible] over a Wal-Mart check-out line is on sale for $50,000 and has attracted a buzz on the Internet.

Kate Kiehl has painted for 26 years, but none of her previous works has garnered the attention given "Blessed Are Thou," which was to share at Art Miami 2007 begin[illegible] Friday.

The painting—acrylic and oil on linen—depicts an angelic Jolie in the clouds, holding her newborn daughter Shiloh while children Maddox and Zahara sit at her legs. Below them is a chrysalis [illegible] Mary, whose woman with in the. The painting is for sale through Dorfman Gallery in Miami, which represents Kiehl.

On her blog, Kiehl said the painting addresses "the celebrity worship cycle. It is said she gives Jolie her daughter's name to children."

She added "because of her unavailable presence in the media, the worldwide anticipation of her child, her 'unattainable' beauty and the good that she is doing in the world she might be [illegible] example." AP

Bacharach suicide

BEVERLY HILLS, California—NBC [illegible] Bacharach, daughter of songwriter Burt Bacharach and actress Angie Dickinson, committed suicide. Bacharach and Dickinson said in a statement Friday.

Nikki Bacharach, 40, suffered from Asperger's Disorder, a form of autism. She killed herself Thursday night at her residence in Toluca Lake, said Linda Dozoretz, a spokeswoman for the family.

"She quietly and powerfully committed suicide to escape the Gorgon Or her brain brought on by Asperger's," the statement said.

Nikki Bacharach died of suffocation using a plastic bag and helium, said Mike Feiler of the Neuter's Coroner examiner's office.

Burt presumably in 1966, Lee Nikki Bacharach studied geology at Cal Lutheran University but could not pursue a career in the field because of poor eyesight.

She loved kittens, and earthquakes, glacial melting, abalone divorce, salmon, Star Wars and concerts and Judaism," the statement said.

Nikki was the only child of Burt Bacharach, 77, and Dickinson, 75, who were married from 1965 to 1981. AP

Happy with Madonna

LILONGWE—Malawi's government is happy with the way pop diva Madonna is looking after a one-year-old Malawian boy after her plans to adopt the child last year caused a storm of controversy on all[illegible] and on Friday.

Principal Secretary in the Ministry of Planning and

NORTH Carolina artist Kate Kiehl's painting, "Blessed Are Thou," featuring Angelina Jolie and her three children.

MADONNA and adopted son David

Child Welfare Adessa Michaela said Reuters she government is satisfied so far at the way Madonna is looking after David Banda.

"We have been monitoring her and so far we see a loving mother to Madonna and David is very fine... they further should be very worried," Michaela said.

Yilawa Banda, David's father, this week said he wanted to talk to Madonna and find out how the child is doing.

David Banda, whose mother had died, was living in an orphanage and his father—who initially would voice questions about the process— later said he supported it. Reuters

Lighten up—Drew B

NEW YORK—Drew Barrymore wants everybody to lighten up.

"Just know, it's all just because," the 32-year-old actress said in the February issue of Harper's Bazaar magazine, on newsstands Jan. 16. "Don't take life so seriously. Don't take fashion too seriously. Don't take love and your relationship so ... heavy all the time."

She continues: "Laugh, laugh, laugh. Life is full [illegible] school and it's weird and everybody talks about everybody so just laugh..."

Barrymore, a once party-loving girl who fe-

DREW BARRYMORE

RUSHES

glorietta GREENBELT TOWN ATRIUM MARKET! Ayala Malls

AT THE CINEMAS

G1	1 BLOOD DIAMOND	2 [illegible] CASANOVA 3	3 DRAGON	4 ROB-B-HOOD				
G4	1 ROB-B-HOOD	2 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO	3 BLOOD DIAMOND	4 DRAGON	5 SNAKE BATTLE KASALI II	6 DRAGON	7 GRIFFIN & PHOENIX	
GB1	1 BLOOD DIAMOND		2 DRAGON					
GB3	1 DRAGON		2 BLOOD DIAMOND					
	3 DRAGON	4 ROB-B-HOOD	5 GRIFFIN & PHOENIX					
ATC	1 DRAGON		2 BLOOD DIAMOND					
	3 ROB-B-HOOD	4 GRIFFIN & PHOENIX	5 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO					
ACC	1 DRAGON	2 BLOOD DIAMOND	3 ROB-B-HOOD	4 YEAST				
M2	1 DRAGON		2 GRIFFIN & PHOENIX					
	3 ROB-B-HOOD	4 BLOOD DIAMOND	5 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO					

At the Activity Center

GLORIETTA	TOWN CENTER
Honda Car Exhibit January 19 to 21, 2007	Power Rangers Space Patrol Delta (4PD) Meet & Greet Event January 21, 2007
ATRIUM CENTER	MARKET! MARKET!
Live Remote Broadcast of Miss Cebu Coronation Night January 19, 2007	Manila Breakfast Carnival Event January 6 to 7, 2007

Greenbelt 5 Street Food presents Collumpio at Food Plaza
January 19 to 21, 2007

Christlife — Repertory Philippines presents NOISE MURDERS at REP's Studio Theater – January 12 to 28, 2007

Ayala museum — Born in Conveyance: Asian Boutique Juvenal Ramos Prints, June March 19, 2007

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TIMEZONE Time for Fun!

...tonight ignored and little understood in the western world, where most people are far more worried about their waistlines."

AXIS "Mood Diamond" director Edward Dzitck: "Hunger is a food genre issue. When you have to picture some opinion that that is not exciting the lives of people whose concern is being exploited, can leaders change."

Stallone defends boxing

MEXICO CITY—Sylvester Stallone defended boxing, praised the hard work of Mexicans and dished out some jabs against 50 plans to build a small-ass to southern border, as the 60-year-old actor visited Mexico City to promote his book pitch-fighting film, "Rocky Balboa."

Stallone said Thursday that his latest episode of the Rocky saga shows an ordinary man fighting back against life's difficulties and was moved by his ex-super-ring opponents.

"It's like bullfighting or certain sports where you underneath to be sealing," Stallone said reporters. "The thing is you have two men who are prepared, two men who have a connection and know exactly what they're doing, it's not like two wrong men smacking strangers." AP

EVA MENDES

Eva Mendes resists stereotyping

HONG KONG—Actress Eva Mendes says she first noticed a part in the upcoming movie about boxing, Mark Wahlberg, Joaquin Phoenix and Robert Duvall because it was not stereotypical, but finally relented when the director agreed to adjust her role.

The Cuban-American actress said in the Saturday interview in Hong Kong that she objected to the role in "We Own the Night" for stereotyping Latinas.

Mendes said director James Gray changed her mind by modifying her character.

"He said we would collaborate and he trusted me for the part," she said. AP

LINDSAY LOHAN

His is news stuff?

...reaking of Lindsay ...ohan, this married ...ory On the Amer... ...ond Press.

From Jane Stah... ...reported.

Lindsay Lohan ...to leave surgery ...tensive hot up ...ombs, her publi... ...s. Lindsay Kimm... ...ohan, said Thurs... ...ssistant.

...Drink ...do ...ined to give do... ...ohan is in a ...ed response to ...gery by Ten... ...assistant.

...Schaffer's show axed

LOS ANGELES—Former "Will & Grace" star ...gene Schaffer's syndicated talk variety show is finished after less than five months.

The hour-long "The Eugene Schaffer Show" has been canceled and production has been halted, NBC Universal Television Distribution said Wednesday. Original and repeat episodes of the show, which debuted last September, will air through January.

"I am extremely proud of the show we created and am thankful for the passion and tireless efforts of [executive producer] Cindy Benton and the entire staff," Schaffer said in a statement. ...ubsequently issued by NBC Universal.

Schaffer, who played the outrageous and spoiled socialite Harriet on "Will & Grace," was lauded by NBC Universal as "one of the most talented people in our business," and the company thanked her for her "tireless contributions."

A representative for the show has yet to be announced. AP

No hard feelings

...OS ANGELES— Cena Suddeikus a news slamming talent for ...ast December's party for host-from-hell romper ...g WOOD for WIFE?

"I would never stick for something so for a fashion," ...r 20-year-old dancers choreographer told AP Television in a recent interview.

"Everybody's trying to get to [actor/rapper's] trying to ...e their best and ... you only hope for the best and ...e can stick for the long for someone," he continued. ...o, hopefully both shows will be successful and there ...e both outside and we'll have a great time."

[Judd]'s show is the reality competition "Elimination ...on" on the Television's Entertainment cable ...annel, airing Wednesdays at 10 p.m. ET. Lopez is ...oducing MTV's "Diamonds," about an aspiring ...ancers struggling to make it. The eight-episode se... ...s premieres Jan. 31 at 10:30 p.m. AP

Feuding lovebirds discuss problems on TV like no one was listening

CALLALILY performs at the Inquirer anniversary program recently.

Callalily boys live their dream

TAKE FIVE

'We got our name from a bread na may leche flan sa loob. We planned to change it after one gig, but we never got the chance'

By Oliver M. Palumbarit
Lifestyler

THE MEMBERS OF MEDIO ALTERNATIVE pop band Callalily are an unassuming bunch, but that facade belies their collective ability to rock, and rock audiences with it.

The five young men, most of whom study music in a Manila university, are "normal" 18- and 19-year-olds who resolve to be humble amid the successes they're currently experiencing. Their debut album, "Destination XYZ," is "doing well," they said, while from the dressing-room mirror, they avid-ly spied movie ribbons of their songs "Sana" and "Take My Hand," have been helped in getting Callalily noticed.

Vocalist Jean Cipriano, rhythm guitarist Tatet Jacinto, lead guitarist Eldee Acosta, drummer Leo Bolaro and bassist Aaron Alcántara agree that they are far like playful kids when together, but that creating songs and avoiding vagrancy are matters they take seriously.

Both intimately and vocally, "Destination XYZ" sounds like a cross between the early works of gifted local bands Sponge Cola and Violent Playground, with noticeable hints of contemporary foreign rock act influences thrown in. But points of comparison aside, Callalily's songs are charmingly ritzes and mature-sounding, even when they predominantly speak of young love and frustrations.

Six of the 12 songs in the collection are in Filipino, performed just as expressively and convincingly as the English numbers. Style-wise, the members are letting their music evolve naturally.

"Iyan alternative pa rin siya," says Aaron, "ha-ha-ha-ha influences nanan-sin nman eh, na-the-result is a mix of that."

What does "Callalily" mean, and when were the group formed?

Jean: We got the name from a bread na may leche flan sa loob. Tatet and I formed a band in high school. It didn't have a name so we called it us.

Aldee: After the gig, we were supposed to change it but we didn't get the chance, as we just stuck with it. The band was formed for just one gig. But after that, every-valay na. We got a fundraising gig at Camp Crame. Luckily, we met our manager, Dennis Hernandez.

Ram: Before we had a manager yet, kami-kami lang, we looked for gigs, we sold tickets. We've been together since July 2000—that's a year and a couple of months.

How collaborative has the songwriting process been?

Jean: For this album, I wrote five songs. Leo wrote three; Aldee wrote two. Our manager wrote one. I write songs—and then I present them to my band mates. They listen, and then make suggestions. When we arrange a song, there no hesitation: yung kanya-kanyang ideas. Basta sa tulubhan.

What attracts listeners to your songs?

Tatet: Our songs, parang simong bahay. They're based on experiences. So we connect with teenagers and people who understand the emotions we write to convey. Hmmm! Yung tunog.

What exactly inspired "Kiss," Flute?

Leo: Actually, that's my first composition, and it's one of our first songs as a band. Any-dami niyang pinag-daanang arrangement. Aldee sing down, so in labas ng genre. It's about a relationship that you regret because it ended. I was able to write that, because I gave up my love life when I got so busy with the band.

So what's the song in "XYZ" that appeals to you most and why?

Aaron: Aba, "Flame" ang sweet lo-ve-so-to. It's an upbeat song. Less verse-time; it was inspired by "Boyfriend" by Justin T., so first it was kind of a Christmas song, but we decided to make it bi-sexlet, to make it also about friendship.

Tatet: "Takipsilim," because the song is very emotional. Darnalo nyong it. When you hear it, it can make you emotional.

Aldee: For me it's "Magkaiti" because the melody is very catchy and I couldn't get it out of my head for a long time. Less-ame nanon-ti...

Leo: "Take My Hand." That was the last song we arranged. Aldee-ang gave it to me, the song, where I felt that are natured.

Aaron: "Dream" because it has a happy, upbeat melody. You'll dance to it, and there's the part where people can really sing along to.

Has it been easy to adjust to the demands of Callalily's schedule?

Aaron: I was a basketball player in high school. I used to be a varsity player until I played once with a band. I thought, ang-sa-pala, I-to-pala. I'm-singing. Now that I'm in college, I realized that I really wanted to do music. I couldn't shake it off. I love writing songs, too. Having full-time musician-life kasi. Aral si-ensayo, gig si-gaft. Self-discipline lang kung paano the-balance. We learn for first, all experiences pala, then we just play. Sa'yo very happy with what we're doing.

How different are your lives?

Jean: Everyone can relate to us, but our crowd is mostly made up of students. We're surprised because they're very supportive. We never imagined we'd have this kind of support. We call them "Callalovers."

Aldee: They go to onlinegalilahi-heights.net to show us that they care. They tell us things like, "May dare ako-I-take-you-out-sa-mall-ako!"

Ram: Ang sarap na parang night-ang, pero-kami ng-bahay-eske, valid-naman, like we're role models. It's band anniversary, you're very-excited so you don't make mistakes. We have young and old fans.

Aldee: An English teacher e-mailed me about our music and thanked us! There are those who are young at heart who enjoy our music, so that's great.

Aaron: there been weird experiences?

Jean: There are some people who get possessive. Ang-kalalaki-na, ha, but-ano-yang-mahihilig-mo, tapos-kahit-likhan ka sa tipi! Sometimes, when they get too excited, they clutch you everywhere. One time, someone-dedo-my-bottom. Leo-hot-ka-eroks, too.

Aldee: We try to-understand-them all. Sometimes it's very hard. Sa'yo-thankful for every-single-one of them.

After becoming visible in the past year, what has Callalily discovered about creating and sharing music?

Ram: It's a dream, and in-life, we got from the-center at the right time. We've learned how to respect and be friends with other bands. We discovered that we really love doing this, and it makes us happy. There are responsibilities, you have to practice, you have to be really good. Personally, I'm learning that the-faster-you-are-the-more you-have-to-practice. That we-learn, the more we should be humble. We're like a band of brothers-who-are-play, may-pout.

Aldee: The more successful you-get, the more people would think you're rock stars or something. You have-to-stay-humble-not to be-that-way.

Leo: One thing in a band doesn't only-means you have to be skilled in playing music. It's a group effort. You have to know your band mates and-trust them.

'Peter Pan' in Manila

CHILDREN'S BOOK INSTITUTE invites the public to watch "Peter Pan" on Jan. 13, 2 p.m. at the Main Theater of the Cultural Center of the Philippines.

Filipino children are the benefit matees of the special show.

On Jan. 13 staging launches the Manila run of J. M. Barrie's classic, bringing new life to the characters of Captain Hook and his pirate gang, the Jolly Roger, Peter Pan and the Lost Boys in faraway Neverland.

New characters have also been added—the fairy Queen, The Sister (backed by a five-chair of 18 voices) and Tiger Lily's Indians.

What first actors and performers will be joined by Filipino children who are auditioned for parts in the musical.

KID FIT

Tickets are at P2,900, P2,400, P1,800, P900 and P500.

Discounts are available for groups, students and senior citizens.

For inquiries and reservations, call 891-3883 or 752-1179 to 80.

'Beauty and the Beast'

The Ateneo Children's Theater will stage Disney's version of the classic fairy tale "Beauty and the Beast" on Jan. 26 and 27 and Feb. 2 and 3, 4 p.m. at the Irwin Theater.

The tale is about a prince who has been turned into a hideous beast by a roseate-odious-he spurned because of her looks.

The cast is composed of 150 grade schoolers from Ateneo, Miriam and St. Bridget, with Carlo Arnold Ong and Ramon Angelo Sayoni alternating in the lead role.

"PETER Pan"

"BEAUTY and the Beast"

of Beast and Wilela Collins Bengson and Stephanie Eve Santos as Belle.

The proceeds will go to Tawasal Kalinga-to-Bicol.

Dance tilt winners

Colegio de Santa Rosa Makati, winner of the Best Cruise Tours Synergy Dance Competition in 2006, was named champion of this year's all-female dance contest.

The group bagged P100,000, a plaque and scholarship grants from the Asian College of Science and Technology (ACAST).

Second placer was the International School of Manila, recipient of a P100,000 and a plaque.

Last year's grand winner, School of Saint Anthony, placed third, with P50,000 and a plaque.

Scratching the itch to bitch

THE ULTIMATE SHAME IS SUPPOSED TO engender warm, tender feelings of peace and harmony, but Donald Trump and Rosie O'Donnell obviously prefer to scratch the itch to bitch.

O'Donnell criticized Trump for his fat-glove treatment of a misbehaving Miss USA, and Trump promptly bounced him on "The View," the TV show she co-hosts with Barbara Walters and other feisty women.

Strong, Trump lashed back, hitting out just O'Donnell, but also her publicist, provoking another round of tender and mutual threats of lawsuits. Viewers welcomed the negativity, because it would scrapped the tedious confinement to their up.

Instantaneously, that is Trump's second big "catfight" to erupt over matronly diva-hood during his hair with Martha Stewart over the flap that her version of "The Apprentice" turned out to be.

Is "The Donald" acquiring a reputation for sticky-fending outh women? Her better for him to be rich than to bitch, so he should instantly desist, before he gets dramatically Trumped.

Also, Trump said O'Donnell went down in bitching it up this contest. Other contestants over-reactors include stars pitted against each other by media people eating for a bloody bowel, and bitchy reporters like the one who recently asked Paris Hilton what her acquaintance Britney would sound like if she were given a "Hanna-Barbera of the '60s" sound.

Well, Paris was called a rich bitch for nothing, another reason to be flattered, and relieved that the sorry lame-viewer with her rapier tongue and talons gone.

Change of image

ANGEL Locsin is only 28 years old, too she's been a star for some three his memory, so she can't be blamed for feeling sorry about how her '70-film career is going. It's going great guns, but that's for now, and tomorrow is always an unknown quantity, especially as the in-must-see concoction of

How much longer will these stars last to a "travel" term title? Twenty it in 20-love, so does that mean her choice of roles should narrow, too? It's happened with other young stars, why should she be the exception that proves the rule?

That's why for her new Valentine's Day movie with Richard Gutierrez, Angel has agreed to do comic romantic scenes with more guys than sweethearts. It helps a lot that Richard is a perfect gentleman who can be trusted to keep the spittle love scenes as professionally acted as possible.

Before Angel decided to make young adult romcoms on her screen image, she was known as the punch by the likes of Angelica Panganiban in "Gimme Five" and Kaye Abad in "Gigil." So, she isn't exactly breaking new ground, just keeping up with the competition.

What about Richard, is his image in for some sexy updating? Nope. By some strange version, male stars saved as offered by adult romidolization as their female counterparts. In fact, actor really finds play is sour and frisky even into their 30s.

In any case, Richard is an boy-next-door to projection that he probably wouldn't be bothered to be loosely acted scenes. From "Cute" to "sexier" is a shift that only a few actors can be expected to pull off. In the US, think Leonardo DiCaprio, and Hilary Swank. Here at home, think Nino Bautista, not Richard Gutierrez.

'Doors'

AT 9 PM, on Jan. 13, HBO scores, "Doors," starring Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson, hit the fan future, the film follows a group of hardened mariners to a research facility on a planet Mars, where they must destroy an

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

...and how much longer will fans like Angel Locsin?

ROSIE O'Donnell vs Donald Trump

arms of nightmarish monsters created by an ex-professor gone bad by army.

Theater Lobby Display

REPRESENTING the Philippines, Robinsons Galleria Movieworld won the Asian DIMMIE Grand Prize of the recently concluded Theater Lobby Display Investigation for the Disney Pixar film, "Cars," organized by Buena Vista International, beating all other Asian countries in competition.

ARANETA CENTER

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ERAGON | ROB-B-HOOD | THE BLOOD DIAMOND | Glorietta Cinema

HAPPY FEET | GRIFFIN & PHOENIX

MAGIC MAGIC MAGIC | ENTENG KABISOTE 3 | SNAKE RATTLE & ROLL | ERAGON

MALL 5

1 ERAGON | 2 ROB-B-HOOD | 3 THE BLOOD DIAMOND

4 KAMA SUTRA, KASALI, KASALO | 5 GRIFFIN & PHOENIX | 6 SNAKE RATTLE & ROLL

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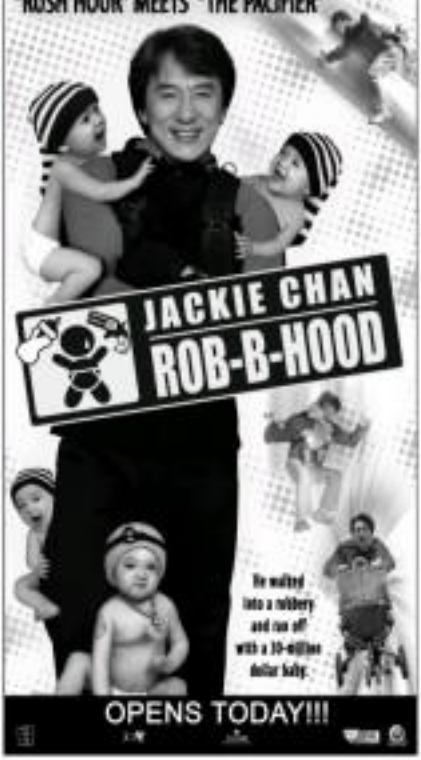

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1 ERAGON - THX	6 ROB-B-HOOD
2 BLOOD DIAMOND	7 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL 8
3 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO	8 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
4 GRIFFIN and PHOENIX	9 MANO PO 5
5 ERAGON	10 LIGALIG

ERMITA

1 ERAGON	
2 ENTENG KABISOTE 3	6 BLOOD DIAMOND
3 GRIFFIN and PHOENIX	6 ROB-B-HOOD
4 ERAGON	7 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

METRO EAST

1 ERAGON	5 ERAGON
2 BLOOD DIAMOND	6 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
3 ROB-B-HOOD	7 GRIFFIN and PHOENIX
4 ENTENG KABISOTE 3	8 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL 8

NOWALICHES

1 ERAGON	5 KAMASUTRA 3
2 BLOOD DIAMOND	6 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
3 ROB-B-HOOD	7 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

PIONEER

1 ERAGON	3 ROB-B-HOOD
2 BLOOD DIAMOND	4 GRIFFIN and PHOENIX

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STA. ROSA

1 ERAGON	
2 ROB-B-HOOD	
3 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO	
4 ENTENG KABISOTE 3	
5 KAMASUTRA / LIGALIG	

LIPA

1 ERAGON	
2 ROB-B-HOOD	
3 ENTENG KABISOTE 3	
4 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO	
5 KAMASUTRA 3	

DASMARIÑAS

1 ERAGON	
2 KAMASUTRA 3	
3 ROB-B-HOOD	
4 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO	
5 LIGALIG	

ANGELES

1 ERAGON	
2 BLOOD DIAMOND	
3 ROB-B-HOOD	
4 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO	

IMUS

1 ERAGON	
2 BLOOD DIAMOND	
3 ROB-B-HOOD	
4 ENTENG KABISOTE 3	
5 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO	
6 KAMASUTRA 3	

STARMILLS

1 ERAGON	
2 BLOOD DIAMOND	
3 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO	
4 ENTENG KABISOTE 3	
5 ERAGON	
6 ROB-B-HOOD	

BACOLOD

1 ERAGON	
2 SCHOOL FOR SCOUNDRELS	
3 THE RETURN	
4 ERAGON/SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL 8	
5 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO	
6 ENTENG KABISOTE 3	

ILOILO

1 ERAGON	
2 KAMASUTRA 3	
3 THE RETURN	
4 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO	
5 ENTENG KABISOTE 3	
6 SCHOOL FOR SCOUNDRELS	

The Perfect Gift All Year Round

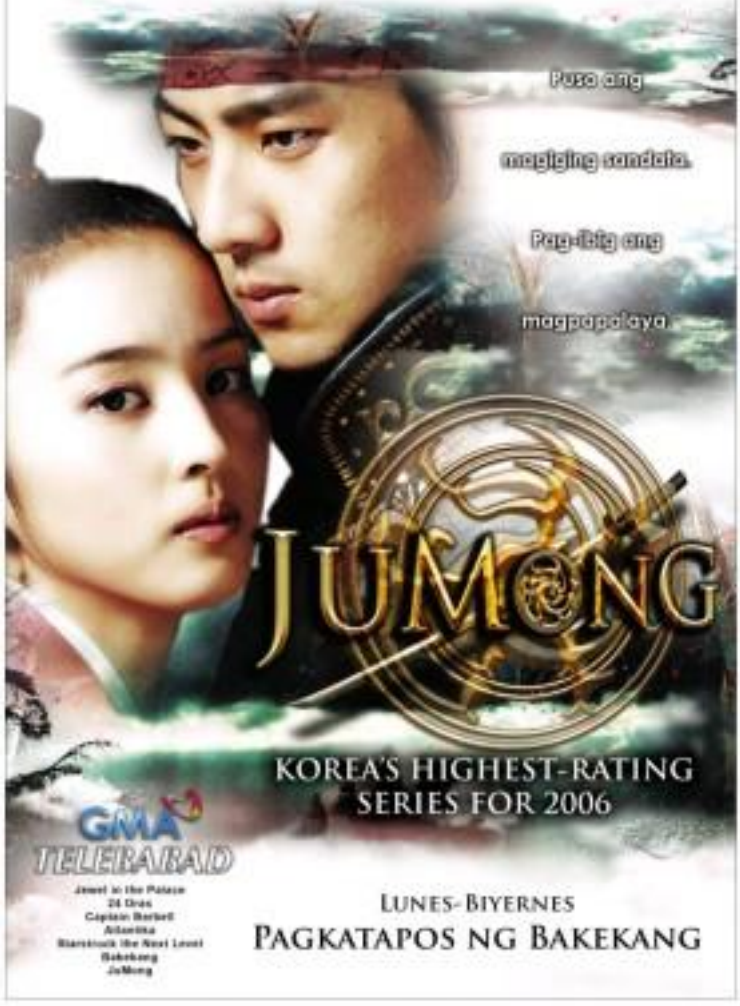
A Per Paid Movie Pass to the Hottest Seats in town.

FUN SNAPS FROM 2006

IS IT TRUE, we asked Marisol Soriano, that she used to bathe in milk? No, she said, but added that she wasn't one to disregard "practical" beauty routines, like applying cream on her face at night and keeping the moisture in with socks. And did that work? we asked again. She showed us.

PHILIPPINE TV PREMIERE TONIGHT

Following in the footsteps of Jewel IN THE PALACE, the next epic series the country will be talking about



GMA TELEBABAD

Jewel in the Palace
24 Oras
Captain Barbell
Atlantika
Starstruck the Next Level
Bakekang
JuMong

LUNES-BIYERNES
PAGKATAPOS NG BAKEKANG

OPENING TODAY

Eragon

Stars Edward Speleers, Sienna Guillory, Jeremy Irons, John Malkovich
Directed by Stefen Fangmeier

Based on a series of novels by Christopher Paolini, this fantasy spectacle follows the exploits of a farm boy (Speleers) who becomes a Dragon Rider, "a high-flying defender of freedom and justice," Gene Seymour of Newsday says he's reminded of "Star Wars" crossed with "Dragonheart." "The director's backgrounds... in visual effects and digital projection" ensures a handsome-looking dragon." John Monaghan of Detroit Free Press announces that "for all the promise of breathing fire and chasing maids, [it] doesn't generate any real heat.... Surprisingly, the spirit of Seth's not just so-so." Kyle Smith of New York Post says it "harks back to olden times: the 1950s." Carrie Rickey of Philadelphia Inquirer opines that "like the book, the movie version is for and about adolescents."

Blood Diamond

Stars Leonardo DiCaprio, Jennifer Connelly, Djimon Hounsou, Arnold Vosloo
Directed by Edward Zwick

A cynical diamond smuggler (DiCaprio), a fiery magazine writer (Connelly) and the beleaguered father of a child guerrilla (Hounsou) stumble in and out of the war zone in Sierra Leone in 1999—when prize smuggled out of the African country and sold to European buyers for arms money. John Anderson of Newsweek cares that the director and his cinematographer Edward Zwick burn "ironic several thrilling action sequences [and] the actors consistently make the moments believable by emphasizing the touches of ambiguity in the script." David Denby of The New Yorker answers "Without sensationalizing, Zwick throws us the workings of a recurring phenomenon that goes beyond heartbreak to the most sordid tragedy." Tyler of Boston Globe states that the film "treats both its social conscience and its Hollywood calculation on its sleeve."

Gridiron Gang

Stars Dwayne Mahoney, Amanda Peet, Blair Brown, Lois Smith
Directed by Ed Stone

A remake of a 1976 TV movie starring Mickey Mills and Jill Clayburgh, this "eminently unoffensive drama[a]" tells the story of a divorced dad (Mahoney) who is diagnosed with an inoperable cancer at the same time that he starts his soul mates (Brett, Michael Beckenhoffer of Hollywood Reporter rants that the "big-screen version has all the engaging mannerisms of a 105-minute drug"... recycling almost the film-by-the-numbers, by-the-blokes direction to the umpteenth performances." David Nusair of Reel Film Reviews dismisses it as "an unrelenting piece of work.... [with] as absurdly sentimental and melodramatic screenplay." MovieFilm.com observes that this "palpably Funny Lives story [has a] severe [don't] to blindingly obvious."

Rob-B-Hood

Stars Jacky Chan, Richael Ran, Louis Koo, Charlene Choi
Directed by Benny Chan

Compulsive gambler and thrice (Chan and Koo) end up caring for a baby that they earlier rescued and must kidnap for emolument and his detrimental mother Jay Weinberg of Variety asserts for the "super ... gloss to the lethal action noir's strengths, while saddling him with a helpless-men-and-a-baby formula long past its sell-by date." Lee Marshall of Screen Daily notes that "there's good buddy chemistry between Koo and Chan.... [in spite of] some sluggish plot bridging scenes." Felix Cheung of Channel News Asia points out that Chan's high links are a rehash of Arnold Schwarzenegger's in "Kindergarten Cop" and Vin Diesel's in "The Pacifier"..."it's a desperate movie.... All the gags you've seen before in 'Three Men and a Baby.'"